



Matadors bring the fun, bellies to Bulls games 12-13



Wednesday
DECEMBER 17, 2008

redeyechi



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You don't have to spend a fortune to have a lot of fun on New Year's Eve
pages 18-19

BK feeling flame-broiled heat over ads 11

Obama faces tough questions—from kids 7



2do

To rally

Remember children who have been killed by gun violence this year at a ceremony at noon Wednesday at the James R. Thompson Center (100 W. Randolph St.). Mayor Daley and Minister Louis Farrakhan will speak.

To save

Use your MasterCard at savings.mastercard.com and you can get discounts on electronics, clothing, food and more.

To dine

Eat at Carnivale (702 W. Fulton St.) before Christmas Eve, and you'll receive a \$15 gift certificate good until Jan. 31.

To buy

Find some geeky Christmas cheer in the form of Yoda in a Santa suit with the Star Wars Holiday Yoda (\$19.99) at toysrus.com.



>> Got some ideas for 2do? E-mail redeye2do@hotmail.com.

txtable

Aye, aye caption

Text us a funny caption for the photo at right and we'll print the best in Thursday's RedEye. To give it a shot, text the word "caption" followed by your brief caption and your name to **47383**. Good luck!



TUESDAY'S WINNER
"U.S. Marines finally capture the leader of doll-Qaida."
—Rob Clinite

What's the deal?

Don't wait until the weekend to get down and dirty with the heroes of "Dirty Dancing"! Select tickets to Tuesday and Wednesday evening performances at Cadillac Palace Theater are on sale through Jan. 14. Use the code "JOHNNY" at the box office or when you purchase tickets online to score main-floor seats for \$44. The offer is subject to availability. For more information on this and other Broadway in Chicago deals, visit broadwayinchicago.com/specialoffers.php. >> Got a deal that you want to see in RedEye? E-mail ritaredeye@tribune.com.

AP PHOTO



25 15

TODAY'S FORECAST

Snow finally ends but it's gonna be cold



THU.
30
29

Oh no: sleet & snow



FRI.
30
15

Mostly cloudy



SAT.
28
14

Clouds, maybe snow



SUN.
15
7

Winter really begins

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John Walsh, host of "America's Most Wanted," embraces his wife, Reve, on Tuesday after a news conference to announce police have identified the man who killed 6-year-old Adam Walsh (below) more than two decades ago.

TRIBUNE



STUDY HALL

2 trillion tons

More than 2 trillion tons of land ice in Greenland, Antarctica and Alaska have melted since 2003, according to new NASA satellite data that show the latest signs of what scientists say is global warming.

More than half of the loss of landlocked ice in the past five years has occurred in Greenland, based on measurements of ice weight by NASA's GRACE satellite, said NASA geophysicist Scott Luthcke. Since 2003, when the NASA satellite started taking measurements, Alaska has lost 400 billion tons of land ice.

'TORTURE' OVER FOR TV HOST

POLICE IDENTIFY KILLER OF WALSH'S SON

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. A serial killer who died more than a decade ago is the person who decapitated the 6-year-old son of "America's Most Wanted" host John Walsh in 1981, police in Florida said Tuesday.

The announcement brought to a close a case that has vexed the Walsh family for more than two decades, launched the TV show about the most notorious criminals and inspired changes in how authorities search for missing children.

"Who could take a 6-year-old and murder and decapitate him? Who?" an emotional John Walsh said at Tuesday's news conference. "We needed to know. We needed to know. And today we know. The not knowing has been a torture, but that journey's over."

The suspect, Ottis Toole, had twice confessed to killing Adam Walsh, but later recanted. He claimed responsibility for hundreds of murders, but police determined most of the

confessions were lies. Toole's niece told John Walsh that her uncle confessed on his deathbed in prison that he killed the boy.

Hollywood Police Chief Chadwick Wagner said Tuesday that after a fresh review, there is no new evidence in the case that began on July 27, 1981. Still, he concluded pedophile and serial killer Toole abducted and killed the boy 27 years ago.

Wagner said if Toole, who died in prison 12 years ago, was still alive, he would be arrested and probably convicted of Adam's murder.

Adam Walsh was on a shopping trip with his mother when he was snatched from a Sears store at the Hollywood Mall on July 27, 1981. His severed head turned up two weeks later in Vero Beach, and his body has never been found.

Over the decades a half-dozen names, including that of serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, have emerged as suspects, but Toole has always been at the top of the list.

Toole died in prison of cirrhosis of the liver. The self-described transvestite claimed to be a cannibal and was the lover of infamous Texas serial killer Henry Lee Lucas. **AP, SOUTH FLORIDA**

SUN-SENTINEL CONTRIBUTED.

Ticker, meet 'flipper'

CNN's headline Ticker, a bottom-of-the-screen fixture since Sept. 11, 2001, passed away before dawn Monday at the age of 7. The cause of death was progress. It's successor: the Flipper, so named by CNN Senior Vice President of Current Programming Bart Feder.

The Flipper presents information one item at a time, spilling from the lower left side and remaining static long enough to be read as an entire phrase, the Tribune reported.

Here, and on following pages, RedEye salutes the Flipper—and honors the Ticker—with a ticker of our own.

THERE'S A PLACE IN FRANCE: Angry nudes protest Paris proposal to strip art school models of tips. The models stripped in near-freezing temperatures outside city's cultural affairs bureau.



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hey, cta

Have something to say about public transit in Chicago? Send your ideas and opinions to goingpublic@tribune.com.

"I live in the condo building next to the Lawrence Red Line station, and since these lights have been installed my entire unit is lit up like a Cubs night game. My bedroom is so bright at night it's like living next to Clark Griswold."

The case of the courteous driver

Rude and risk-taking bus operators, you got served in Tuesday's "Going Public." Columnist Kyra Kyles talked to CTA officials about riders' recent bad bus experiences and found out the agency is considering equipping onboard bus cameras with audio to mitigate those meltdowns. Riders weighed in on that potential problem solver, their own bus beefs and other issues along the rails and routes.

Change of pace

My tale is of a pleasant one, for a change. I remember being on the 95W coming from Evergreen Plaza. It started as a typical bus ride until I paid more attention to the bus operator and noticed that he was greeting everyone who came onto the bus. I was so impressed with his sincerity that I called in to the CTA hot line and gave the manager on duty the bus number and the operator's badge number.

I feel that people are really quick to call in about some bad experience they've had riding the CTA, and maybe rightfully so, just don't neglect to call about those great operators who do their job well.

—LAWRENCE CADE, AUBURN GRESHAM

Lights out

Just recently the CTA installed new lights at the Lawrence Red Line station that are so bright they can be seen from outer space.

These don't look like any kind of "green" lights (or solar powered). They are so powerful that you can actually hear them humming away from the street. Not to mention there are rows and rows of them, which is totally unnecessary considering the station is outside. I take the Red Line every day and have not seen lights so bright on any of the other stations I pass.

Also, I happen to live in the condo building next to the station and since these lights have been installed my entire unit is lit up like a Cubs night game. My bedroom is so bright at night it's like living next to Clark Griswold [the Christmas lights enthusiast in "Christmas Vacation"]. I don't know how much longer I can live without sleep. —RENEE RADWAY, 37, UPTOWN

Turnstile trouble

The "L" platform at State and Lake has a tricky situation with regards to the turnstiles. The platform is narrow and people congregate right in front of the turnstiles while waiting for a train. It is difficult for people who pay their fare and try to get on to the platform.

And as for people exiting off the cars, it's like swimming upstream: The people just stand there. I wish the CTA employee on the platform would ask people to spread out. The platform is long enough for people to do so. It is even more difficult if people have luggage; they always seem to just leave them right where you can trip over them. —CINDY COHLT, 54, CHICAGO



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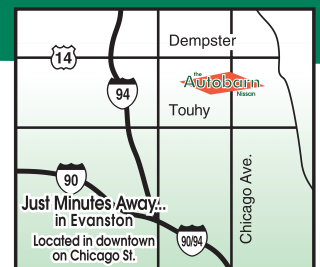
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chicago

Kids raise hands to ask Obama

Associated Press

A dozen grade schoolers got their own chance to quiz President-elect Obama on Tuesday, getting an earful on such issues as longer school days, how it feels to be on television, and even the first puppy's "business."

"How will you feel when you move to the White House?" one child asked.

"I'm going to be excited," Obama said, explaining that he would have a "pretty nice office" in the shape of an oval when he got to Washington.

Obama was joined by Vice President-elect Joe Biden and Arne Duncan, Chicago schools chief and Obama's pick for education secretary, after a news conference at Dodge Renaissance Academy.

Obama met with them in a library at the academy. They sat on the carpet in front of him, each eagerly raising their hands to ask questions and discuss what they were learning in school.

"Decimals," Obama replied to one student. "Wow, Joe doesn't even know his decimals," he joked about Biden.

Not all the questions were light-hearted. One child, who said a cousin was serving in Iraq, asked Obama about the troops overseas.

"One of the things that I promised I would do is to try to bring this war in Iraq to an end," Obama said, adding that he hoped to have them home in about a year and a half.

Another asked Obama what he would do to represent the efforts of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

"Dr. King used to talk about the fact that, you know, no matter what your job is, you want to do your best," Obama said. "And right now your job is to learn, so when you guys are in class you got to make sure you're working as hard as you can."



Arne Duncan speaks after being nominated to be education secretary by President-elect Obama as Vice President-elect Joe Biden looks on. GETTY IMAGES

ARNE OF ONE

OBAMA PRAISES DUNCAN AS REFORMER WHO CAN IMPROVE SCHOOLS

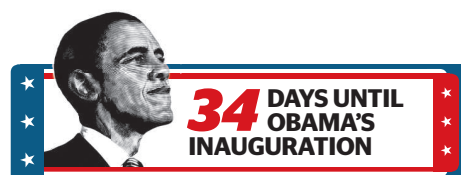
Associated Press

Hundreds of thousands of children in this country do not learn and eventually drop out of school. That is Arne Duncan's problem now.

Duncan, Barack Obama's choice for secretary of education, confronted the challenge on a smaller scale as head of Chicago Public Schools for the past seven years. He managed to raise test scores and graduation rates, and he improved the quality of teaching. But, still, the problem is not solved.

Obama acknowledged as much Tuesday as he announced his selection of Duncan. But he also chose to highlight Duncan's approach by choosing a Duncan turnaround story as the backdrop for the announcement—Dodge Renaissance Academy. Duncan closed the perennial test score cellar-dweller in 2002 and then reopened the school with new staff, an overhauled curriculum and more teacher training. Within years, test scores there soared.

"Look, we're not going to transform every school overnight," Obama said. "But what we can expect is that, each and every day, we are



OPEN SPOTS

Among the cabinet appointments President-elect Obama has yet to make are CIA director, national intelligence director, labor secretary and transportation secretary.

thinking of new, innovative ways to make the schools better." He called it "morally unacceptable" not to do better.

The 44-year-old Duncan, like Obama a Harvard alumnus, ran an education nonprofit on the South Side before working in the public school system under former chief Paul Vallas, now the schools chief in New Orleans.

Duncan said he is "deeply, deeply grateful to be part of the Obama team" and touted education as the nation's most pressing issue.

"It is the civil rights issue of our generation.

And it is the one sure path to a more fair, equal and just society," Duncan said.

The new administration must do its work under the umbrella of No Child Left Behind, the accountability law that prods schools to improve test scores each year so that every student can read and do math on grade level by the year 2014.

Obama pledged during the campaign to overhaul No Child Left Behind, yet it remains unclear how much of the law Obama would actually undo.

At least some Chicago teachers said they were disappointed with the pick. "I don't believe Mr. Duncan's model is a model for America," said Deborah Lynch, a teacher at Gage Park High School and a president of the Chicago Teachers Union from 2001-2004.

Lynch criticized Duncan's strong advocacy for charter schools, which tens of thousands of students now attend. She accused him of dismantling of the public school system on which so many poor children depend. **TRIBUNE**

CONTRIBUTED.

Clash over potential special election

SPRINGFIELD Republicans have launched a political ad campaign demanding a special election to fill the Senate vacancy that Gov. Blagojevich allegedly tried to sell, hoping to pick up a seat they had no shot at before the scandal.

Democrats, after initially supporting such an election, this week canceled a vote on the matter and backed away in the name of good government. Republicans say Democrats are simply afraid of losing the election, particu-

larly if a potential backlash arises from the criminal charges against Blagojevich.

President-elect Obama was pulled into the dispute Tuesday when Obama refused to say whether he supports a special election. The RNC said Obama “punted” rather than take a position on a vital issue.

The battle over Obama’s seat unfolded as a special Illinois House committee met for the first time to consider impeaching Blagojevich, who is accused of trying to auction off the

seat to the highest bidder.

The panel’s review is expected to include the criminal charges against Blagojevich as well as a long list of other possible wrongdoing during his six years in office.

The committee met only briefly, postponing any real action until the governor’s attorney arrives Wednesday. Ed Genson’s remarks to the panel could give the first hint of whether Blagojevich intends to fight every step of the process. Blagojevich kept up his routine

Tuesday of leaving for his Chicago office without commenting to reporters parked outside his home.

Minutes later, a Chicago judge delayed indefinitely the sentencing of jailed political fundraiser Antoin “Tony” Rezko, probably adding to Blagojevich’s problems.

The delay appeared to signal that Rezko’s on-again, off-again relationship with the federal prosecutors investigating Illinois government was on again.

Interesting lawsuit, if it flies

A Florida couple are suing United Airlines for “negligently” over-serving alcohol during a flight from Osaka, Japan, to San Francisco, saying the carrier’s drinks fueled the domestic violence involving the two shortly after their plane landed.

Fortified with Burgundy wine allegedly supplied at 20-minute intervals by United crew members during the December 2006 trip, Yoichi Shimamoto became so inebriated “that he could not manage himself,” according to a lawsuit filed Dec. 5. Shimamoto was arrested, accused of disorderly conduct and battery after he struck his wife, Ayisha, six times, injuring her face and upper lip as they were heading through U.S. Customs in San Francisco, the complaint said.

The lawsuit is highly unusual and will likely hinge on whether Chicago-based United, in effect, operated a flying bar that’s subject to the same legal liabilities as earthbound drinking establishments, legal experts said.

At issue: whether laws that hold bars and restaurants responsible for harm caused by intoxicated patrons apply when the bartender and drinker are flying at 40,000 feet across international territory.

Responded United spokeswoman Jean Medina: “We believe that a lawsuit that suggests that we are somehow responsible for the consequences of a passenger’s physical assault on his own wife is without any merit whatsoever.”



Ugly commute

Tuesday’s snow made for a nightmare evening commute across Chicago, including on I-90/94 in the West Loop (above). Up to 6 inches of snow is possible in some parts of the area by Wednesday morning. As of 8 p.m., the National Weather Service reported 3.8 inches of snow on the ground in Rogers Park and 3.2 inches at Midway. **PHIL VELASQUEZ/TRIBUNE**

Twitter travel

Some of our Twitter followers had a really slow trip home Tuesday.

@digitalove

Schaumburg to north side of Elmwood Park, 4 hours & counting

@1BigH

3hrs to go 13 miles north on Milw. Ave from Northbrook to Libertyville, usually 45 minutes. ugh.

@MSURabbott

Madison to Belmont/Lakeshore via 135 - usually 30 min, today 2 hours

@zachmorrison

left Aon center at 515. Trip normally takes 45 minutes. Going on an hour and only at Belmont on way to Morse.



Two armed robbers escape bank

Two armed robbers took over a Bank of America branch in Riverside on Tuesday morning, but the holdup was cut short when a passing cab driver called police to report seeing customers lying spread-eagle on the bank floor, authorities said.

The call led to a two-hour neighborhood lockdown as police and FBI agents swarmed the building and searched its three levels before realizing that the bandits, including a possible third getaway driver, had escaped. A manhunt for the three men continued Tuesday evening as investigators reviewed the bank’s security cameras for clues identifying them.

At least five employees and two customers were inside the bank during the takeover, authorities said. No one was hurt.

The standoff began when police arrived and the bank manager informed them that he had not seen the bandits leave the building at 3300 Harlem Ave. As SWAT team members from 30 neighboring suburbs searched the building, authorities placed a nearby elementary school on lockdown and cordoned off several blocks.

Authorities also halted traffic on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Metra line to keep railroad crossings clear for officers arriving from other communities. Police arrived by 9:30 a.m., but there was no sign of the bandits. The manager said he didn’t see the men exit, prompting a search of the two-story building and its basement.

The men escaped with money, but police wouldn’t say how much.

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Fed thinks big by slashing key interest rate to new low

1 **WASHINGTON** In a radical move, the Federal Reserve slashed its key interest rate to a record low on Tuesday and vowed to use all the weapons at its disposal to fight the worsening recession, which has dragged down consumer prices and home construction.

The Fed created a new target range for its federal funds rate so that it will hover between 0.25 percent and zero. That dramatically lowers the Fed's targeted rate, called the federal funds rate, which had stood at 1 percent.

AT A GLANCE

Slammed by the financial crisis, worried banks have hoarded their cash and been extremely reluctant to lend money to customers. Fearful consumers, watching jobs vanish and their investments tank, have sharply cut back their spending, including on big-ticket purchases like homes and cars that involve financing.

The bold move surprised economists, most of whom were predicting the Fed would cut the funds rate in half to 0.50

percent. The funds rate is the interest banks charge each other on overnight loans.

With the Fed's key rate dropping to rock-bottom levels, the central bank is moving into uncharted territory.

Nonetheless, Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues made clear that the central bank isn't running out of ammunition to fight the worst financial crisis since the 1930s. It is exploring using tools—other than rate cuts—to revive the economy.

Out of the flame broiler, into the fire

Burger King's "Whopper Virgins" ad campaign is the company's latest salvo in its long food fight with rival McDonald's.

But it appears to have missed the mark.

Critics have heaped a super-size helping of scorn on the ads, suggesting it smacks of "corporate colonialism," "cultural bullying" and the worst kind of Ugly Americanism.

The ads use the familiar blind taste test formula, but with a twist:

"What happens if you take remote Chang Mai villagers who've never seen a burger, who don't even have a word for burger, and ask them to compare Whopper versus Big Mac in the world's purest taste test?" the voice-over solemnly intones. "The Whopper Virgins will decide."

The Chang Mai villagers are Hmong people from northern Thailand. Inuit villagers from Greenland and peasants from the Transylvania region of Romania also have been recruited to sample the burgers.

But the Whopper project has left a bad taste in the mouths of many who have seen it.

Barbara Lippert, a columnist for Adweek, called the ads "culturally tone-deaf."

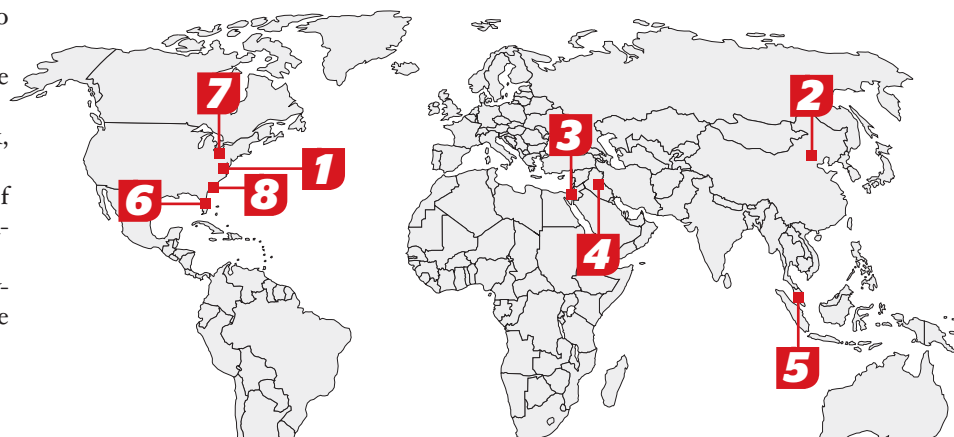
But Russ Klein, Burger King's president of global marketing strategy, defended the campaign in a news release:

"During a time when consumers are craving it most, honesty and transparency are the heart and soul of this campaign."



Seeing things differently

2 This week, China marks the 30th anniversary of a pivotal Communist Party meeting in 1978 that initiated the current era of reforms, marking a shift toward the pursuit of modernization. Here, people walk past a giant billboard Tuesday in Beijing featuring sunglass-wearing Chinese women from the '80s. **AP PHOTO**



Deadly bus accident

3 A bus filled with Russian tour guides crashed through a roadside barrier Tuesday and tumbled down a steep ravine in Eilat, Israel, killing at least 26 people in Israel's worst traffic accident.

AP PHOTO

Shoe trial?

4 The Iraqi journalist who hurled his shoes at President Bush was expected to appear before a judge in Baghdad on Wednesday in the first step of a complex legal process that could end in a criminal trial, a government official and the reporter's brother said.

Free airline tickets

5 Southeast Asia's leading budget airline—AirAsia—said Tuesday it will give away 100,000 plane tickets as part of a regional marketing campaign to woo tourists to Thailand after that nation's political turmoil.

Request denied

6 A judge in Orlando has denied requests from Casey Anthony, the mother of missing toddler Caylee Anthony, to force investigators to turn over their photos, videos and drawings from the woods where a child's remains were found last week.

Body towed

7 A man who was killed in a car crash was left dead in the crumpled vehicle when it was towed away, and the body was not discovered until family members found it two days later, police in Cleveland said Tuesday.

Southeast quake

8 A weak earthquake shook parts of the South Carolina coast near Charleston on Tuesday, tipping over people's Christmas trees, knocking pictures off walls and causing minor injuries.

DIGIT

160

Federal officials say there has been a huge increase in the number of arrests of people trying to use fake passports and visas as they cross the U.S.-Mexico border in California. Officials said Tuesday that 160 people had been arrested in the past year, and that fewer than 20 such arrests were made over the previous one-year period.

sports

Giant steps

The Matadors dance squad is definitely large and in charge

Chicago Tribune

Dripping sweat and gasping for breath, 10 big men shimmy and shake to the beat of Justin Timberlake's "SexyBack." Flabby arms and thunder thighs move in syncopated unison. Bellies jiggle and wide hips wiggle in what looks like a cross between elephant ballet and some strange, sumo-style striptease.

When the music stops, the choreographer shakes her head in dismay.

"Unacceptable!" barks Kim Tyler, a thin and graceful woman who looks a bit like a butterfly amid a herd of rhinos. "Way too sloppy. Let's do it again!"

Two hours before showtime, this is the first run-through of the night for the Matadors—the tubby, all-male dance troupe that provides oversize entertainment at Bulls games. Standing at the half-court line of the United Center, Tyler wants to see a little more heart from the men and a lot more belly.

"I need to see the shirts come all the way up," she yells, instructing the men to flash the full girth of their tremendous torsos. "Rub your stomachs! Over-exaggerate! Make this bigger!"

Bigger? Weighing in at roughly 300 to 400 pounds each, these heavyweights are nothing

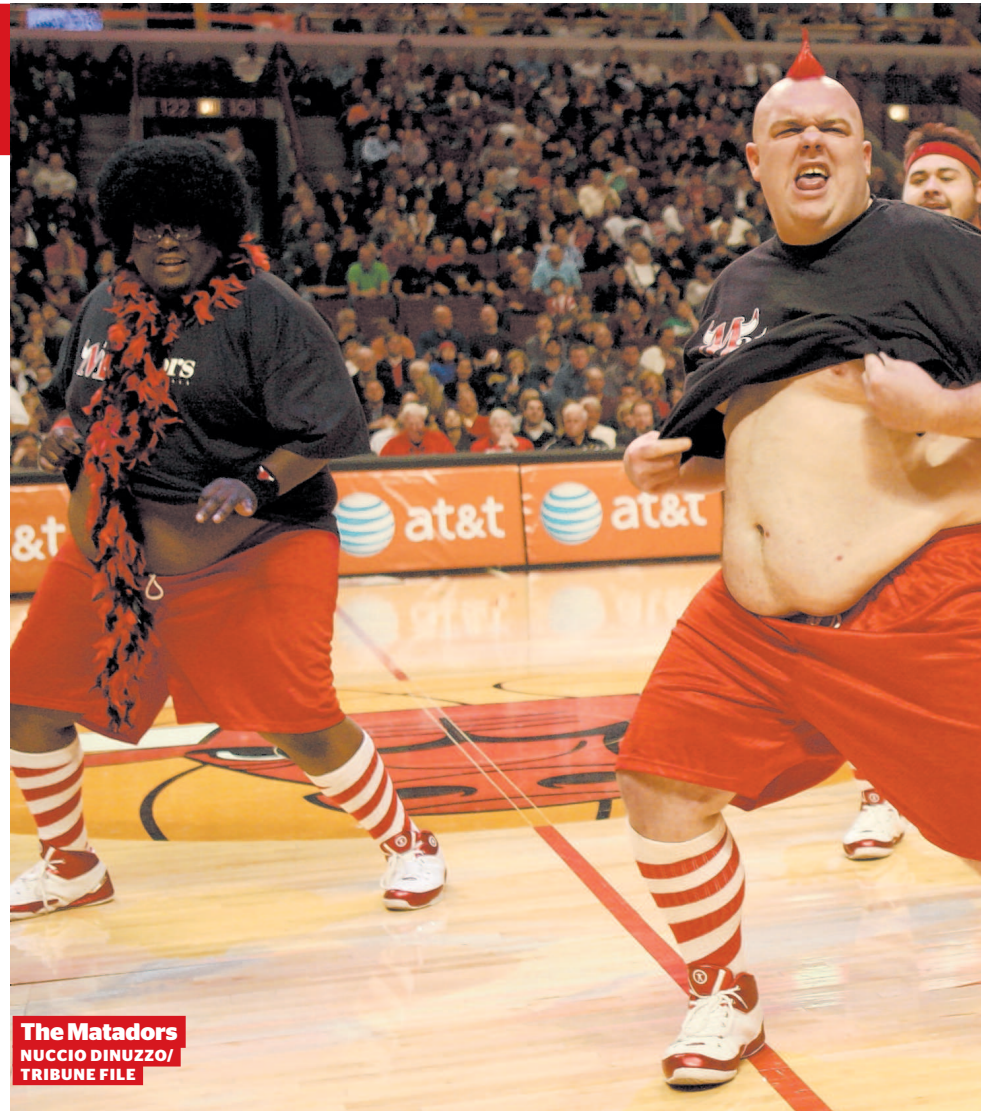
if not big. They have arms like enormous ham hocks, legs the size of tree trunks and bellies with monster truck-size spare tires. For 10 performances each season, these men wobble and whirl across the hardwood, waving their chubby fists in the air, shaking their sizable booties.

"It's a calling, that's what it is," said Tyrone Boozer, a 46-year-old, 5-foot-6, 298-pound shipping and receiving clerk.

And in an odd sort of way, parading around in goofy outfits and flashing their stomachs in front of 22,000 people has helped boost the men's self-esteem.

"The whole object of [being a Matador] is to be who you are and have fun," said Al Cruz, a 5-foot-9, 270-pound Chicago bus driver. "I've always been self-conscious about my weight. But I've learned to come to terms with my bigness. When we do pull up our shirts and show our lovely selves, it's like saying, 'It's OK to be big.' It's like saying, 'See me, love me.'"

Love them the fans certainly do. Before each game, the Matadors walk the concourse of the United Center, where they're mobbed by fans giving them high-fives, cheering, asking for photos, requesting autographs. (The adoration helps make up for the lousy pay;



The Matadors
NUCCIO DINUZZO/
TRIBUNE FILE

Matadors make just \$30 per performance, plus two tickets for friends and families.)

And the players like them too. Tyrus Thomas sometimes makes small talk. Andres Nocioni often pauses to shake hands. Joakim Noah sometimes signals hello by rubbing his belly.

The Matadors have become one of the most well-known squads, appearing on "America's Got Talent," "Live With Regis and Kelly," and

"Inside Edition" and ESPN2. And earlier this year, Disney optioned a script, prompting talk of a movie deal.

On a recent game night, the men gathered in a small locker room littered with cans of Coke, half-eaten bags of popcorn puffs and an empty bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken. They pulled on shirts the size of bedsheets, yanked striped socks over chunky calves and

Meet the Matadors



Kevin "The Cowboy" Blanchard

Age: 31
Size: 6 feet, 303 pounds
Occupation: Market researcher



Tyrone Boozer

Age: 46
Size: 5-foot-6, 298 pounds
Occupation: Shipping and receiving clerk



Steven "Pound Cake" Coleman

Age: 31
Size: 6-foot-2, 390 pounds
Occupation: School security guard



Al Cruz

Age: 43
Size: 5-foot-9, 270 pounds
Occupation: Chicago bus driver



DeLawrence "D-train" Faison

Age: 24
Size: 6-foot-1½ inches, 330 pounds
Occupation: Security guard



Adam McKinney

Age: 25
Size: 6-foot-3, 310 pounds
Occupation: Pizza delivery driver



THERE'S A WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN' GOIN' ON: Want to see the Matadors in action? Check out their sexy moves and how they prepare backstage at chicagotribune.com/matadors.



HOW TO SEE THEM

On Saturday, the Matadors will appear in their annual United Center Christmas show with the cheerleading squad the Luvabulls. For information, visit nba.com/bulls/dance/matadors.html

creased their stomachs with Vaseline. Three minutes!!" called Tyler, the choreographer, pounding on the door.

After a flurry of activity—dancing, joking, singing—the men lined up for a quick practice run-through. "Everybody get your sexy on!" said Corie Paige, 29, a 6-foot-3, 355-pound forklift operator from Joliet. Then they waddled down the hallway

toward the stadium floor.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the announcer called: "The Matadors!"

After hours of practice and weeks of choreography, they hit every mark, pulling their shirts all the way up and flashing their enormous bellies. Most important, they were proud of who they are—Chicago's biggest, sexiest hefty-man stars.

BOBCATS 110, BULLS 101, OT

Rose wilts in loss

CHARLOTTE D.J. Augustin scored a career-high 29 points while outplaying fellow rookie point guard Derrick Rose, and the undermanned Charlotte Bobcats snapped a seven-game losing streak with a 110-101 overtime victory over the Bulls on Tuesday night.

Augustin forced overtime by hitting three free throws with 19 seconds left after Rose fouled him on a 3-point attempt. Augustin put it away with four more from the line in the final 42 seconds of OT, giving Charlotte an unlikely win as it played most of the game without two starters.

Rose had a rare bad game in what's been a remarkable rookie season for the No. 1 overall pick, held to six points on 3-of-16 shooting, with seven assists.

Rose had a potential game-winning shot blocked by Emeka Okafor at the end of regulation and Okafor blocked him again just before Augustin's free throws put Charlotte ahead 105-100.

Ben Gordon scored 25 points and Tyrus Thomas added 22 for the Bulls, who dropped to 3-10 on the road and failed to reach .500 for the first time in a month. **AP**

It's title time—or is it?

When Huey Lewis sang "If this is it, please let me know," there's a good chance he was confused about the final week of his fantasy football season. The NFL regular season may not officially end until next week, but most fantasy leagues hold their championship game in Week 16. Others decide to finish in Week 15 or 17, making it so bewildering that Huey probably should keep the News around just to keep him informed of his fantasy dealings.

If you're playing for a fantasy football title this week, all of that time scouring the waiver wire, bugging other owners about trades and lying to your girlfriend about what you're doing on your iPhone at dinner could soon pay off. For those of you whose teams have soured like holiday eggnog, focus on your New Year's resolution to stop spending high draft picks on rookie wide receivers and anyone with a Lion on their helmet.

Bucaners wideout Antonio Bryant's breakout season has gotten even better in the last three games with nearly 400 yards and 4 TDs. Last week, commentator Emmitt Smith called out Bryant for personal baggage that labeled him an underachiever. The 27-year old said the comments were "[bleep]," and then put up 108 yards and a TD in the first half alone Sunday. Keep him in your lineup this week and hope someone else disses him.

Buc up

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An inconvenient truth

Frank Gore's stellar fantasy season is ending like Al Gore's 2000 presidential campaign—badly. Gore suffered an ankle injury in Week 14 and didn't take a snap on Sunday. Gore has a potentially great matchup against sad-sack St. Louis this week, but his status is still uncertain. Check the injury report on Friday or Saturday and bench him if it looks like he's still hurting.

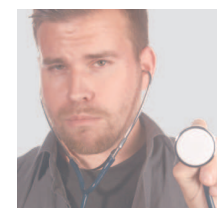
SIT THIS WEEK

Brett Favre: The more he "learns the playbook" the worse he gets.

Willis McGahee: If you haven't already, it's officially time to give up hope.

"Fast" Willie Parker: It might be time to relinquish the nickname.

D.R. SMITH IS A REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.



dr. fantasy

D.R. SMITH
redeyesports
@tribune.com



Mike O'Malley

Age: 35
Size: 5-foot-10, 400 pounds
Occupation: Auto parts assistant manager at a dealership



Corie "Big Tasty" Paige

Age: 29
Size: 6-foot-3, 285 pounds
Occupation: Forklift operator



Keith Roberts

Age: 39
Size: 5-foot-8, 340 pounds
Occupation: Cook



Mike Stack

Age: 24
Size: 6-foot-1, 398 pounds
Occupation: Roofer

TRIBUNE

BULL HORNED: Bobcats' Raja Bell ejected late in the first quarter of game against Bulls for abusive comments directed at referee Eli Roe.

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Cable gal

See Jen Patterson on Comcast SportsNet's "Monsters in the Morning," debuting in January. Until then, catch her on "The Mike North Webio Show" on [wildfirerestaurant.com](#).

TOPIC	JIMMY GREENFIELD jgreenfield@tribune.com	SCOTT KLEINBERG skleinberg@tribune.com	JEN PATTERSON redeyesports@tribune.com	BRIAN MOORE brmoore@tribune.com	DR. FANTASY redeyesports@tribune.com
1 How will L.A. Clippers players adjust to Chicago weather?	There's nothing they can do. There's nothing any of us can do. Winter always wins.	They'll have to light their own fires and shake their own bridges to feel at home.	They will stop at L.A. Tan on the way to the United Center.	They will double layer their bulletproof vests.	It's impossible. I moved here from L.A. last year and this weather drives me to tears.
2 What will come back to haunt the Bears if they don't make the playoffs?	A certain pooch kick against Atlanta. That game still makes me ill.	The ghost of Aunt Bessie's cow.	"The Monsters in the Morning."	Mike Singletary and the rest of the 1985 defense.	The Ghost of Defense Past will point a withered finger at the Bears' underachieving squad.
3 Tampa Bay's Gregory Alphonso White Jr. is now Stylez G. What's your new name?	Gern Blanston.	Jo Frost.	Oh, it's not new, it's Jen Jen the Engine.	The one and only Lawn Moore. Here to cut you down to size.	Dr. Fantasy isn't enough? All right, I'll make it more hip-hop: Doktor Phanta-C.
4 What should Arena Football League players do now that their season is shut down?	"Get me a No. 1 meal with a Coke."	Rent out the arenas to real athletes.	Protest outside of Ditka's restaurant.	Head to Detroit. The Lions could use some real football players.	There's an opening in my fantasy league. I'll leave a spot open for the Arena League.
5 What could go wrong when DePaul plays in Las Vegas next week?	They could play a basketball game.	If by play you mean poker, all sorts of things.	They could run into Pacman Jones.	Craps, anyone?	Let's see ... Demons visiting Sin City? The Magic 8 Ball says: Outlook not so good.



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watch dog

WHIZZER
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I have a beef with the Bulls. No, you heard me wrong. I'm not the beef with the Bulls. And that's the problem.

I don't understand how I could have been passed up for a spot on the Matadors team.

I mean, look at this face; this, um, extra fur for lovin'; these dance moves. Oh, right, this is a newspaper. Well, use your imagination. I can really bust a move.

OK, now my co-workers are giving me with weird looks. Here now, my TV picks.

NBA Bulls vs. Clippers

7:30 p.m. WCIU

What do you know. The Clippers stink now that they let Elton Brand go too.

Boston at Atlanta

6 p.m. ESPN

I'll bet the Celtics would love to have a cute, dancing dog as halftime entertainment.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL UNC Asheville at Duke

6:30 p.m. ESPN2

I was a mascot in college, and I didn't even have to try out. Wait, hazing isn't a tryout is it?



Briggs
CHARLES CHERNEY/
TRIBUNE

Big-time Briggs

Linebacker Lance Briggs could be the Bears' lone representative in Hawaii after being selected to his fourth consecutive Pro Bowl on Tuesday.

Briggs leads the Bears in tackles with 122 heading into Monday night's game against the Green Bay Packers. He also has three interceptions, two fumble recoveries and a forced fumble.

"Obviously, I'm ecstatic about it," Briggs said. "I'm extremely excited. It's always nice to get voted to the Pro Bowl, and this is going four years in a row."

Fellow linebacker Brian Urlacher, who was

named a third alternate, was happy for Briggs.

"He's having a great year, man," Urlacher said. "After the first game of the year I told him, 'You should be defensive player of the year. There's no doubt in my mind.' He just makes plays."

Tommie Harris was named a first alternate at defensive tackle. Center Olin Kreutz, punter Brad Maynard and tight end Greg Olsen were named second alternates. Devin Hester was named a third alternate kick returner.

Rookie running back Matt Forte was left out of the Pro Bowl mix.



COOL RIDE

As a 53-foot-long refrigeration trailer pulled up slowly on the snow-covered streets in front of Wrigley Field on Tuesday, Hall of Famer Bobby Hull jumped into the passenger's seat for a short ride. The trailer was delivering the ice-making equipment for the New Year's Day outdoor hockey game—the Winter Classic—between the Detroit Red Wings and the team Hull led to its last Stanley Cup in 1961, the Chicago Blackhawks. **PHIL VELASQUEZ/TRIBUNE**

HOMETOWN HITS



Gathright
MCT FILE



Joey Gathright and the Cubs agreed to an \$800,000, one-year contract Tuesday, three days after the outfielder became a free agent when Kansas City failed to offer a deal for 2009. Primarily a center fielder, Gathright has played five seasons with Tampa Bay and Kansas City, batting .263 in 399 games.



NEXT GAME
vs. Liberty
7:30 p.m., Wednesday



NEXT GAME
vs. Lewis
7 p.m. Wednesday,
Lakeshore Public Television.



The Blackhawks game at Edmonton did not end before press time.

HIT AND RUN

COLLEGE FOOTBALL Title game goes 3-D

Burbank, Calif.-based 3ality Digital said Tuesday it had won the contract to shoot the Jan. 8 BCS National Championship game in 3-D. The game between Florida and Oklahoma will be broadcast live in 3-D to 80 to 100 movie theaters in about 30 U.S. cities. Tickets are expected to cost \$18 to \$22.

FOOTBALL Vick might move soon

Former NFL star Michael Vick could be out of federal prison and in a Virginia halfway house by Jan. 20, one of his attorneys told a federal bankruptcy judge Tuesday. Vick is serving a 23-month prison term in Leavenworth, Kan., for bankrolling a dogfighting ring and is scheduled to be released from federal custody around July 20.

GOLF Harrington is tops

Padraig Harrington has been voted PGA Tour player of the year by his peers, becoming the first European player to win the award since it began in 1990. Harrington won only twice this year, but they were majors—the British Open and the PGA Championship.

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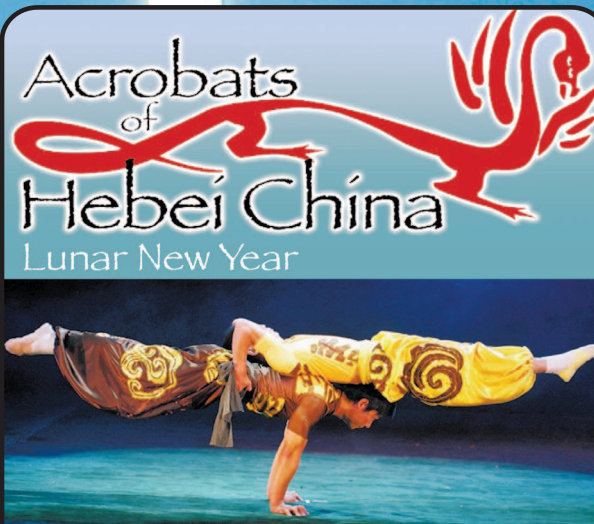
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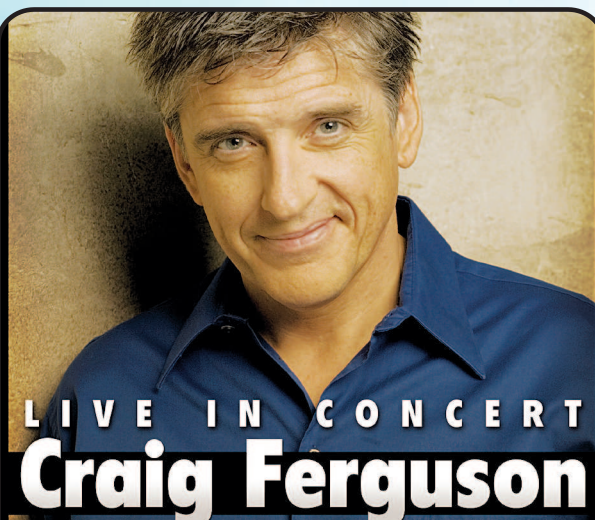
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'09 on a dime

14 ways to party on a budget

By Lisa Arnett and M. Kathleen Pratt

Given the economy's state (dismal) and the cost of most New Year's Eve bashes (\$100-plus), it's not out of line to think you'll need a bailout just to celebrate. Luckily, plenty of bars and restaurants are serving up recession-friendly options Dec. 31. Take advantage of spots doling out freebies, or snag reservations for one of these under-\$50 options.

FREE
FOR
ALL

It's not too good to be true: You do get something for nothing at these **no-cover, no-reservations-needed** bashes.

Resolution 2009 at Plan B

1635 N. Milwaukee
Ave. 773-252-2680

If your bank account no longer permits the pricey party you hoped to hit up, make this affordable bash at Plan B your, well, plan B.

Includes: A hosted Skyy cocktail reception (8-9 p.m.) and midnight champagne toast.

New Year's Eve at O'Shaughnessy's

4557 N. Ravenswood Ave.
773-944-9896

This Irish pub in Ravenswood celebrates its first New Year's with live Irish music, plus drink specials such as \$4 Guinness and \$8 premium gin and vodka martinis.

Includes: Appetizer buffet and champagne toast.

New Year's Eve at BeviAmo

1358 W. Taylor St. 312-455-8255

Ring in 2009 at this charming



O'Shaughnessy's
FILE FOR METROMIX

University Village wine bar with \$5 champagne cocktails.

Includes: Light appetizers (8 p.m.-1 a.m.).

Chief O'Neill's New Year's Eve Party

3471 N. Elston Ave. 773-473-5263

This Avondale pub celebrates its 10th anniversary by scaling back prices on food and drink by 20 percent. Also includes live Irish music, dancing and a DJ.

Includes: A 6 p.m. champagne toast (to ring in '09 in Ireland) and swing dance lessons (8-9 p.m.).



In Fine Spirits
BARRY BRECHISEN FOR METROMIX

**BAR
BASHES**
UNDER \$50

**\$10
New Year's Eve
Broke Bash at
Dick's Last Resort**

315 N. Dearborn St. 312-836-7870

80s Proof plays at this old favorite's 20th annual bash in its new Marina City digs. Arrive before 8 p.m. and they'll wave the \$10 cover.

Includes: Champagne toast and party favors. Cash bar.

Reservations: Not needed.

**\$20.09
Black & White New
Year's Eve Party at
In Fine Spirits**

5420 N. Clark St. 773-334-9463

Dress in black and white and sip \$9 sparkling wine and specialty cocktails.

Includes: Black-and-white-themed appetizers and party favors.

Reservations: Suggested. Depending on space, tickets may be available at the door for \$25.

**\$30
New Year's Party
at Bull & Bear**

431 N. Wells St. 312-527-5973

This soon-to-open River North sports bar dreamed up this value-packed early bird option from 5-8 p.m. for those who want an affordable hangout before a late-night dinner reservation or partying at home.

Includes: Three hours of open bar and heavy appetizers (5-8 p.m.), free entry to sibling spot Stone Lotus' afterparty (1 a.m.-4 a.m.) and a free buffet brunch back at B&B Jan. 1. (11 a.m.-1 p.m.; first come, first served).

Reservations: Required. wanttickets.com

**\$35-\$45
Deja Vu New Year's Eve Party**

2624 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-871-0205

This late-night Lincoln Park hang boasts one of the most affordable drink packages around.

Includes: A call open bar (7 p.m.-midnight), champagne toast and party favors. Upgrade to the \$45 ticket for an appetizer buffet (8-10 p.m.) and access to both floors.

Reservations: Required.

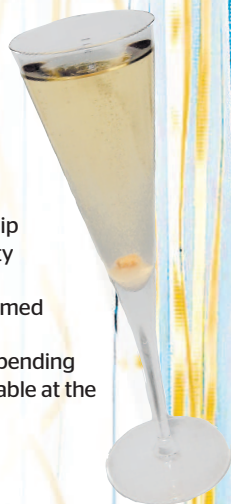
**\$45
New Year's Eve at
The Full Shilling**

3724 N. Clark St. 773-248-3330

Party the Irish way in Wrigleyville for half the price of most neighboring bars.

Includes: A premium open bar (8 p.m.-midnight), appetizer buffet (9-11 p.m.), party favors and champagne toast.

Reservations: Required.



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UNDER \$50

**\$29.95
Silver Cloud
Bar & Grill**

1700 N. Damen Ave.
773-489-6212

The booze is included in this New Year's steal at Bucktown's go-to spot for comfort food—you get a half-bottle of wine or champagne with your four-course dinner. Really want to do it up? Lobster is available as an entree for \$9.95 more.

Seatings: Open 5-11 p.m.; a la carte menu served until 10 p.m.; bar open until 2 a.m.

Reservations: Required for four-course dinner. 773-716-7200. Reservations not accepted for a la carte dining.

**\$35
Delece Grill Pub**

3313 N. Clark St. 773-348-3313

Ring in '09 with a midnight PBR toast and a hearty four-course meal at this casual new Lakeview spot, a sibling to Southport Avenue's Delece. The PBR toast is on the house; beer pairings are \$15.

Seatings: 5:30 p.m.-midnight (kitchen closes at midnight); bar open until 2 a.m.

Reservations: Recommended.



**\$39
The Bristol**

2152 N. Damen Ave. 773-862-5555

This new Bucktown spot sticks to its sharable formula during a special three-course New Year's meal that starts with three sharable starters and ends with two sharable desserts, portioned according to the size of your group. In between, choose from chicken ballantine, bouillabaisse or a vegetarian red onion tart.

Seatings: 5:45-6:15, 7:45-8:15 and 9:45-10:15 p.m.

Reservations: Recommended.

**\$40
Big Jones**

5347 N. Clark St. 773-275-5725

In keeping with Southern tradition, the relish tray that arrives at the start of every meal at this Andersonville spot will include black-eyed pea salad—the little legumes are believed to bring good luck in the year ahead. The four-course meal that follows includes at least three options for every course.

Seatings: 5-11:30 p.m.; cocktails until 2:30 a.m.

Reservations: Recommended.

**\$48
Jerry's**

1938 W. Division St. 773-235-1006

It's rare you find a five-course meal for less than \$50, but this Wicker Park sandwich spot pulls it off. Since no meal at Jerry's is complete without beer, the price includes a glass of Chateau Jiahu, a bubbly beer from Dogfish Head brewery; an optional flight of 6-ounce pairings is only \$12.

Seatings: 6:30-7 p.m. and 9:30-10 p.m.; bar open until 2 a.m.

Reservations: Recommended.

Home is where the party is

By Ryan Smith
FOR REDEYE

New Year's Eve traditionally is the cork-popping, premier party night of the year. But this year, with pocketbooks suddenly thinner than a supermodel, will more Chicagoans opt to celebrate at home?

The upcoming bash at Angelee Aebring's Wrigleyville home will mark the second year in a row she has hosted a New Year's Eve soiree.

"I think you just reach a point where you don't want to stuff yourself in a bar and spend a lot of money on New Year's," said Aebring, 30. "Plus, you have to deal with the hell of getting a cab, paying a big cover charge and getting watered-down drinks, and the bathrooms are dirty."

Instead, Aebring decided to have a "Super Attractive" New Year's theme party at her place and asked guests to wear wigs, capes, bow ties and other regalia to look, in her words, "super attractive."

"We've definitely noticed that more people are planning home parties," said JoAnne Winkler, a party planner and director of sales for Chicago-based A Season to Remember. "We usually get a lot of calls for bartenders, wait staff, private chefs and entertainment, but not as much this year."

Wicker Park resident Kevin Hutchinson said it's not uncommon for him to spend at least \$150 on New Year's when going out. But this year, Hutchinson said he's bypassing the bar for a smaller get-together at a friend's apartment in Bucktown.

"Maybe it's not quite as exciting, but it's much, much cheaper," Hutchinson said. "Plus, my big party night will be Barack [Obama's] inauguration night. Compared to that, New Year's doesn't seem like that big of a deal."

RYAN SMITH IS A REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

KEEP IT IN-HOUSE

If you're planning on throwing your own New Year's Eve party for friends and family, here are some tips that will help make your soiree smashing:

Plan a budget for your party and stick to it. "If you don't carefully plan a budget, you'd be surprised how much the cost can get away from you," said JoAnne Winkler, a party planner for Chicago-based A Season to Remember.

Stick with a signature drink for the first hour. "Serving one signature drink cuts back on costs," said Kristie Sams-Faulkner, president of C&C Event Planning and Management. "I suggest something like champagne and sugar cubes or a chocolate martini, something fizzy that people like."

If you're inviting people who don't know each other, break the ice. Try Partini, a collection of six quick adult party games, or Apples to Apples.



Class up your pad on the cheap. You can hang up your white Christmas lights, for example. "It's cheap and it can really add to the atmosphere," Winkler said.

New Years Eve '08 9PM - Close

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Landmark
FILE FOR METROMIX

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Get one step closer to the gifting finish line at **Artesanas Locales**, a market featuring work by three local women artisans. Browse jewelry, clothing and sculptures, and sample tapas and sangria. Includes a free tango lesson at 8 p.m. 6 p.m.

wed
17

Extra! Extra!

Landmark, 1633 N. Halsted St. 312-587-1600.

We know you love a good party, which is why we put an extra dose of cheer into our **Metromix Holiday Extravaganza**. Dress in your favorite holiday sweater and sing Christmas karaoke with our own Bad Santa, dance to DJ Sye Young and pucker up for our mistletoe makeout booth. Hungry? Don't miss Supper with Santa, a \$35 three-course meal with cookies and "milk" (i.e., a holiday cocktail). 7:30 p.m. No cover. RSVP: metromixpromotions@tribune.com

Flair for drama

The Whistler, 2421 N. Milwaukee Ave. 773-227-3530.

From Barack highs to Blago lows, Chicago has become a haven for drama in the home stretch of 2008. Hop on the train and show off your own theatrical flair at **Holiday Classic Movie Karaoke**. The bar provides costume accessories, a TV monitor and microphone so you can act out scenes from flicks such as "Casablanca," "It's a Wonderful Life" and "Gone With the Wind." 8 p.m. No cover.

Come out and play

Lincoln Restaurant, 4008 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-297-3128.

Add some variety to your nightly entertainment lineup at **Come Out for Change: A Gay-la for Charity**. The benefit for Equality Illinois features a mostly LGBT lineup of comedians and performers, including host and activist Allison Leber, Bill Cruz, sketch team The Alliance and others. 9 p.m. \$10. RSVP: comeoutforchange08.blogspot.com

thu
18

Give it up

Enclave, 220 W. Chicago Ave.

If you've yet to carve out a spot on Santa's "good" list, here's an easy way to make the switch from naughty to nice: Bring a child-friendly gift (worth about \$30) to the inaugural **Latino Toys for Tots Party** for distribution by Erie Neighborhood House. Includes appetizers and hosted Don Julio and Ciroc cocktails. Telemundo anchor Tsi-Tsi-Ki Felix emcees. 6 p.m. 312-829-1009. RSVP required: chicagolatinonetwork.com/holiday2008rsvp.php

fri
19

Rocks, paper, sweaters

Rocks Lakeview, 3463 N. Broadway ; and Rocks Lincoln Park, 1301 W. Schubert Ave. 773-472-7738.

What's better than kicking off the weekend with one **holiday sweater party**? Two parties, of course. Dress to impress (in a corny, tacky way) for the change to win \$100 and swill \$3 shots at both locations of this casual neighborhood bar. Contests take place at 11 p.m.; parties start at 8 p.m. No cover.

HOW TO REACH US | FOR ENTERTAINMENT INFORMATION 24/7, GO TO **METROMIX.COM**.

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For questions, comments and story ideas, contact Matt McGuire, editor, at mmcguire@tribune.com

To submit event information for Metromix or metromix.com, go to metromix.com/listings.





Cheers to 2009!

Celebrate with optional wine pairings (\$50) during Chalkboard's \$75, three-course New Year's Eve dinner. **FILE FOR METROMIX**

New Year's Eve dining

ANGELINA RISTORANTE

Specials, including a chilled seafood platter, lobster bisque, beef carpaccio, duck ravioli and a pan-fried veal chop, accompany the regular menu during three seatings (6 p.m., 8 p.m., 10 p.m.). Includes a champagne toast at midnight. Prices vary; 3561 N. Broadway. 773-935-5933.

BLACKBIRD

Special chef's tasting with optional wine pairings. Regular menu also available. Wine pairings available. \$100-\$150; 619 W. Randolph St. 312-715-0708.

BLUE 13

Four-course prix-fixe with wine pairings from 7-10 p.m. Appetizers and a cash bar after 10 p.m. (\$30). Includes a midnight champagne toast. \$100; 416 W. Ontario St. 312-787-1400.

CHALKBOARD

7 p.m.: Three-course prix-fixe dinner (\$75) with optional wine pairings (\$125). Arrive early for discounts on the regular menu and complimentary food for kids (5-7 p.m.); 4343 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-477-7144.

CHOCOLATE GRAPE

9 p.m.: Cheese, appetizer and dessert buffet. Includes party favors, a truffle and champagne toast at midnight and an open bar (wine, beer and cordials). \$85; 2113 W. Division St. 773-772-3990.

CUSTOM HOUSE

Four-course dinner. A vegetarian prix-fixe is available with advance notice. The late meal includes party favors, a champagne toast and live jazz. Seatings at 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. Open seating and an a la carte menu are offered in the bar. \$75-

\$110; 500 S. Dearborn St. 312-523-0200.

KOHAN JAPANESE RESTAURANT

10 p.m.: Buffet, three-hour open bar of cocktails/domestic beer/house wine and a champagne toast. \$50; 730 W. Maxwell St. 312-421-6254.

LA MADIA

Seasonal specials such as truffle pizza and lobster and pomegranate salad available in addition to the regular menu. Prices vary; 59 W. Grand Ave. 312-329-0400.

LE LAN

Five-course (early seating, 5:30 p.m.) and seven-course (late seating, 8:30 p.m.) dinner. Wine pairings offered for an additional charge. \$80-\$110; 749 N. Clark St. 312-280-9100.

LOCKWOOD RESTAURANT

5-8 p.m.: Regular a la

Ring it in!

For more dinners and bar options, check out our New Year's guide at metromix.com

carte menu; 8-11 p.m.: Multicourse meal with a wine pairing option. On the menu: Kumamoto oyster with champagne bubbles and caviar, foie gras slider with sauternes gelee and chive, and sea bass with onion soubise, braised bibb lettuce and prosciutto jus. \$95-\$150; 17 E. Monroe St. Palmer House Hilton, lobby level. 312-917-3404.

PICCOLO SOGNO

Seasonal specials such as lenticchie con cotechino (lentils with sausage), risotto all' aragosta (risotto with Maine lobster and asparagus) and ravioli di tartufo nero (house-made ravioli stuffed with black truffles and topped with veal ragu) accompany the regular menu.

Includes a glass of BellaVista Franciacorta sparkling wine. Prices vary; 464 N. Halsted St. 312-421-0077.

THE PUBLICAN

Seasonal a la carte menu. Prices vary; 837 W. Fulton Market. 312-733-9555.

THE RESTAURANT CHAISE LOUNGE

8 p.m.: Three-course dinner (\$120) and open bar. After 9 p.m., cover reduces to \$20 with access to a cash bar; 1840 W. North Ave. 773-342-1840.

WEST TOWN TAVERN

Regular menu of contemporary comfort food. Take home a loaf of apricot-pecan bread for a late-night (or early morning) snack. Prices vary; 1329 W. Chicago Ave. 312-666-6175.

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ATMOSPHERE

50 cent select cocktails; 5355 N. Clark St. 773-784-1100.

BAR CELONA AND GRILL

Half-price drinks, \$3 quesadillas; 3474 N. Clark St. 773-244-8000.

BLUE LINE

\$3 Stella Artois bottles, \$5 Absolut martinis; 1548 N. Damen Ave. 773-395-3700.

BOURBON ON LINCOLN

Half-price whiskeys, \$5 pulled pork sandwiches; 3244 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-880-9520.

CACTUS BAR & GRILL

\$5-\$7 Effen cocktails, \$2.95 appetizers with purchase of a drink (2-6 p.m.); 404 S. Wells St. 312-922-3830.

CAT'S MEOW

\$5 artisan cheese plates, \$5 flatbreads, \$6 glasses of wine; 2700 W. Chicago Ave. 773-489-6998.

CITYSCAPE BAR

Complimentary appetizer buffet (5-7 p.m.), \$4 domestic beers and glasses of house wine, \$40 pre-theater deal (two appetizers and two martinis per couple); 350 W. Mart Center Drive, Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 15th Floor. 312-836-5000.

DELILAH'S

\$2 PBR longnecks and Old Crow

cocktails; 2771 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-472-2771.

EMPIRE LIQUORS

DJs Hiroki and Boy Wonder spin '90s hip-hop 9 p.m.; 1566 N. Milwaukee Ave. 773-278-1600.

EVIL OLIVE

\$6 20-ounce Stella bombs, DJs spin. \$5; 1551 W. Division St. 773-235-9100.

FEARON'S PUBLIC HOUSE

\$4 Blue Moon drafts, \$5 Kilo Kai and Coke cocktails, \$6 chicken fajitas; 3001 N. Ashland Ave. 773-248-0990.

FIVE STAR BAR

17 cent wings, \$2 Tecate cans; 1424 W. Chicago Ave. 312-850-2555.

THE FULL SHILLING PUBLIC HOUSE

25 cent wings, \$2 select cocktails, \$2.50 domestic bottles, \$3 Roaring Lion Energy cocktails; 3724 N. Clark St. 773-248-3330.

GALLERY CABARET

\$3 Alpha King and Newcastle drafts; 2020 N. Oakley Ave. 773-489-5471.

GARRETT RIPLEY'S

\$5 signature cocktails; 712 N. Clark St. 312-642-2900.

HIDEOUT

\$2 PBR and Old Style cans, \$2.50 Berghoff bottles; 1354 W. Wabansia Ave. 773-227-4433.

HUNT CLUB

\$5 mango martinis; 1100 N. State St. 312-988-7887.

NIGHTCRAWLERS



Jolly good time

When the 12 Bars of Christmas pub crawl (a.k.a. TBOX) hit Wrigleyville on Saturday, it rallied the most Santa hat-clad, Miller Lite-sipping revelers in its 13-year existence: more than 6,500. Partiers suited up in festive get-ups ranging from elf suits to star-spangled footed pajamas and met at **Cubby Bear** (1059 W. Addison St. 773-327-1662) for a 10:30 a.m. opening ceremony before choosing from a list of nearly three dozen participating bars to create their own pub crawl adventure. The most dedicated TBOX-ers tallied 12 bars before returning to Cubby Bear at 10 p.m. for a karaoke bash.



BARRY BRECHSEN FOR METROMIX

INNJOY

\$1 off glasses of wine, \$2.75 Coors Light bottles, \$4 Sam Adams drafts, half-price large pizzas; 2051 W. Division St. 773-394-2066.

J BAR

Wii Wednesdays. Play Wii video games from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. Specials include free appetizers (6-8 p.m.), \$2 mini-burgers, \$3 beers, \$5 Effen cocktails; 610 N. Rush St. 312-660-7200.

JUNIOR'S

Half-price appetizers, \$5 mojitos and select martinis; 724 W. Maxwell St. 312-421-2277.

KINCADE'S

\$1 domestic bottles, \$5 select bombs, karaoke 9 p.m.; 950 W. Armitage Ave. 773-348-0010.

KIRKWOOD BAR & GRILL

\$3.50 pints, \$5 wraps, \$5 Effen Black Cherry bombs; 2934 N. Sheffield Ave. 773-770-0700.

LIZARD'S LIQUID LOUNGE

\$5 martinis; 3058 W. Irving Park Road. 773-463-7599.

THE LOCAL OPTION

8 p.m.: Pub Quiz. Pub trivia with prizes and up to five players per team. Players should arrive by 7:30 p.m. No cover; 1102 W. Webster Ave. 773-348-2008.

MAHONEY'S

8 p.m.: St. Practice Day. Get ready for St. Patrick's Day at this monthly bash. Includes T-shirts and giveaways. Drink specials include \$5 Guinness and Bass drafts and \$3 green beer drafts. No cover; 551 N. Ogden Ave. 312-733-2121.

MCFADDEN'S RESTAURANT AND SALOON

\$1 cans, \$2 well drinks, \$3 bombs; 1206 N. State Pkwy. 312-475-9450.

MINIBAR | WINEBAR

\$1 bruschetta (5-7 p.m.), \$1 Miller Lite bottles, \$3-\$5 cocktails, \$7 house martinis; 3339-41 N. Halsted St. 773-871-6227.

MURPHY'S BLEACHERS

\$3 Two Brothers Heavy Handed IPA drafts, \$3 brats, \$3 Maker's Mark cocktails; 3655 N. Sheffield Ave. 773-281-5356.

NICK'S UPTOWN

\$5 for a house shot and a select beer, \$5 select cocktails; 4015 N. Sheridan. 773-975-1155.

THE ORBIT ROOM

\$3 well cocktails, \$7 el cubano sandwiches; 2959 N. California Ave. 773-588-8540.

THE OTHER SIDE BAR

\$4 Jager bombs, \$10 draft pitchers; 2436 N. Clark St. 773-525-8238.

THE PONY

Half-price glasses of wine and martinis, half-price salads; 1638 W. Belmont Ave. 773-828-5055.

RAW BAR

Half-price bottles of wine with entree purchase, half-price tapas and appetizers; 3720 N. Clark St. 773-348-7291.

RED IVY

\$3.50 Heineken, Heineken Light bottles, \$5 individual one topping pizzas; 3525 N. Clark St. 773-472-0900.

SILVIE'S LOUNGE

\$4 Red Bull vodkas, \$5 Jager bombs and Jack and Cokes; 1902 W. Irving Park Rd. 773-871-6239.

SMART BAR

\$2 PBR cans, \$3 SoCo cocktails; 3730 N. Clark St. 773-549-0203.

TSUNAMI

7 p.m.: Wine Pairing Wednesday. Sample five Japanese vintages and culinary creations at this monthly tasting. A wine expert is on hand to discuss the pairings. \$47; 1160 N. Dearborn St. 312-642-9911.

VINES ON CLARK

Pack the Patio Polar Bear Party. Sip \$1 Miller Lights outdoors on the heated patio. Other specials: two-for-one appetizers, \$3 Bacardi cocktails, \$3 Sam Adams drafts; 3554 N. Clark St. 773-327-8572.

Random Acts of Greatness

5

things we're loving this week

Old Oak Tap
FILE FOR METROMIX

1 The **build-your-own beer flight** option at Old Oak Tap (2109 W. Chicago Ave. 773-772-0406) is just the thing for indecisive lightweights. For \$8, choose 6-ounce pours of any three beers on tap.

2 The acting showcase in the big-screen adaptation of Pulitzer Prize-winning play "**Doubt**." Meryl Streep's not at her best, but Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams and Viola Davis are outstanding, and Oscar will take notice.

3 The **loaded bloody mary bar** at Charlie's Ale House (5308 N. Clark St. 773-751-0140). With add-ons ranging from chili powder and cumin to pickles and stuffed olives (yes, skewers are provided), this could be one of the best DIY marys we've had. Served with a beer back, \$7.50.

4 Steppenwolf Theatre recently started a love affair with **Irish playwright Conor McPherson**. Case in point: It's producing two of his plays—both take place on Christmas—this holiday season. After seeing "The Seafarer," a superbly acted meditation on redemption, we understand the love. 1650 N. Halsted St. 312-335-1650. \$20-\$70.

5 You can't throw a snowball in Andersonville without hitting a restaurant, but we keep returning to contemporary Korean spot Jin Ju (5203 N. Clark St. 773-334-6377) for **bi bim bap** (try the dol sut version in a sizzling stone pot, \$14) and **flavorful sojutinis**, such as the Jinjer (\$8) made with ginger liqueur.

Join the randomness!

What are you loving this week? Log onto **metromix.com** to send us your own Random Acts of Greatness. You might just spot your pick in a future issue.

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Chicago Tribune

Oddly hilarious

drmanhattan cracks up audiences—even when the band's not joking

By Matt Pais

Listening to the self-titled debut by local rockers drmanhattan—with its angular grooves, attacking rhythm section and screeching vocals—is a bit of a roller coaster. Interviewing singer/guitarist Matt Engers, 21, and his brother, bassist Adam Engers, 23, is too.

One minute the Wauconda-based pair's talking earnestly about how grateful they are for their success and how the most important thing in the world is to be true to yourself. The next they're discussing sexual frustration and wanting to have a concert called "Get Raw," during which they cover themselves and the audience in gross stuff like mustard, ketchup, vomit and ground beef. Perhaps this is the kind of mayhem we should expect from a band that claims to simultaneously embrace nothing and everything and whose name was inspired by a character from the comic book series "The Watchmen."

In "The Watchmen," Dr. Manhattan is clairvoyant and can also teleport. Which ability would you rather have?

Adam Engers: Clairvoyance kind of scares me. Teleportation can be used in a good way, but it can also be used to quickly escape something you should confront face to face. It'd be great if you're in the middle of a riot and you just want to get out.

I can see your somewhat unpredictable music inspiring confusion from an audience. What reactions do you usually get?

Matt Engers: A lot of times after we play shows, a lot of people are like, "Man, that was hilarious."

AE: We played one show with Alkaline Trio. And [singer Matt Skiba] came up to us after our set. He was like, "Great set. That was hilarious." And shook our hand. That's all he said.

LOCAL FOCUS

drmanhattan

When: 5:45 p.m. Monday

Where: Metro, 3730 N. Clark St.

Tickets: \$10, \$7 with canned food item, 773-549-0203

How do you take that?

ME: I think it's great. ... I mean, our goal isn't always to be funny. But I know we are kind of goofy people.

Well, should people take your music seriously or as a joke?

ME: I think in order for a comedy to be funny, you have to take it very seriously. The character doesn't know it's funny. If the character's laughing, then it's not as funny.

So you're hilarious because you don't know what you're doing is funny. Or why.

ME: Yeah.

AE: Like when we compose a song, we take it very seriously. We spend as much time as we need to make us all feel like it is complete. But we would never want someone at our show to stand there and be like, "All right. What's going on? They're going from A to G here ..."



drmanhattan
(top, from left):
Nick Vombrack,
Adam Engers,
Matt Engers,
Andrew Morrison

Gotcha. You're playing one of Metro's "Home for the Holidays" shows. What's your strangest family holiday tradition?

ME: At our [aunt's] house ... after we all unwrap our presents, it's always tradition we have a paper fight. And throw the wrapping paper at each other.

What's the worst injury that's ever caused?

AE: Grandma fell over and broke her hip.

But the tradition remains!

ME: She just fell over and she was like, "Good shot."

AE: No, there's been no injuries.

What do you have up your sleeves for the Metro concert?

ME: I don't want to say too much, 'cause I want it to be a surprise for the show. But it's going to make you feel warm inside like the holiday season.

AE: Actually we're going to dump eggnog over the whole crowd. Throughout the entire show. It's raining eggnog.

Ha. So drmanhattan, how difficult was evil medical school?

AE: Treacherous. They made us do things I would never want anyone else to imagine.

Like what?

AE: Oh, man. They put us in pitch-black rooms and [told] us to give brain surgery to our close relatives.

Yet your relatives still get together for the holidays.

AE: Well, it makes it a lot easier to throw paper at them. Because they go slower now.

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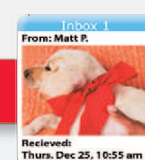
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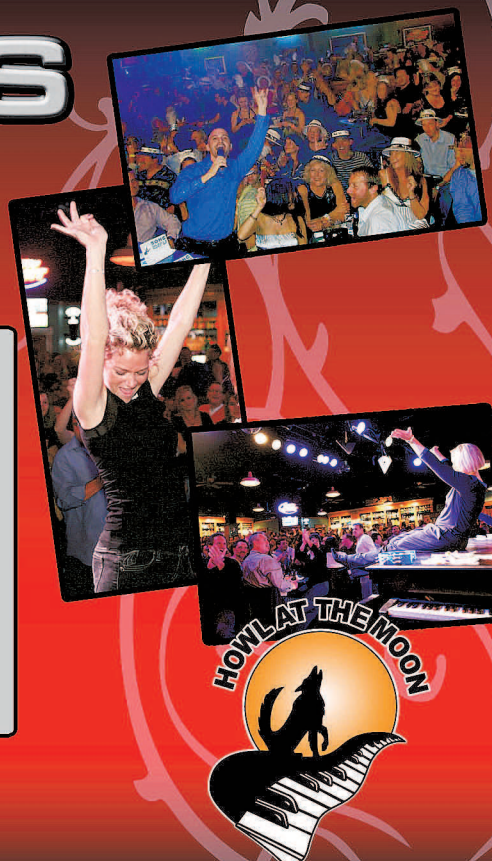
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9:30 p.m. \$5 suggested donation. Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-728-6000, 773-728-6000.

ALFONSO PONTICELLI AND SWING GITAN

9 p.m. \$25-\$30. Green Mill, 4802 N. Broadway. 773-878-5552.

ANNA MAURY

8:30 p.m. Cover varies. The Underground Wonder Bar, 10 E. Walton St. 312-266-7761.

ANTIQUE SCREAM

9 p.m. \$8. Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont Ave. housecallent.com

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9 p.m. Free. Quenchers Saloon, 2401 N. Western Ave. 773-276-9730.

BEN BOYE, MATTHEW GOLOMBISKY, CHARLES RUMBACK

8:30 p.m. Cover varies. The Velvet Lounge, 67 E. Cermak Rd. 312-791-9050.

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9:30 p.m. \$7. B.L.U.E.S., 2519 N. Halsted St. 773-528-1012.

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9:30 p.m. \$10. Green Dolphin Street, 2200 N. Ashland Ave. 773-395-0066.

DKV TRIO WITH FRED ANDERSON

9:30 p.m. \$12. Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia Ave. 773-227-4433.

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8 p.m. Free. Reggie's Rock Club, 2109 S. State St. 312-949-0120.

FLATBED ORANGE, INDIGNANT, PAPER AIRPLANE PILOTS, BROWNLIN FIASCO

8 p.m. \$6-\$9. Bottom Lounge, 1375 W. Lake St. 312-666-6775.

FRANK CATALANO SEPTET

2 a.m. Free. Green Mill, 4802 N. Broadway. 773-878-5552.

J.W. WILLIAMS BLUES BAND WITH PATRICIA SCOTT

9 p.m. \$8. Blue Chicago at Ohio, 536 N. Clark St. 312-661-0100.

JIMMY BURNS, ANDRE TAYLOR AND THE BLUES ALLEY CATS

9:30 p.m. \$12. Kingston Mines, 2548 N. Halsted St. 773-477-4646.

KENNY PHELPS

8 p.m. Free. Redhead Piano Bar, 16 W. Ontario St. 312-640-1000.

LINSEY ALEXANDER

9:30 p.m. \$10. Buddy Guy's Legends, 754 S. Wabash Ave. 312-427-0333.

MARC COURTNEY JOHNSON WITH THE DAN CRAY TRIO

8 p.m. \$7. The Morse Theatre, 1328 Morse Ave. 773-654-5100.

MARQUES CARROLL TRIO

9 p.m. \$8. Pops for Champagne, 601 N. State St. 312-266-7677.

MIKE SMITH QUARTET

9 p.m. \$10. Andy's Jazz Club, 11 E. Hubbard St. 312-642-6805.

NICK MAZZARELLA 9 p.m. Free. The Winds Cafe, 2657 N. Kedzie Ave. 773-489-7478.

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8:30 p.m. \$8. Elbo Room, 2871 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-549-5549.

PETER MILETIC

11:45 p.m. Free. Redhead Piano Bar, 16 W. Ontario St. 312-640-1000.

Metromix's top shows



LONGWAVE

New York indie rockers can be both gorgeous and pounding. With *The Silent Years*, *Rock Falls*. 9 p.m. \$12. Double Door, 1572 N. Milwaukee Ave. 773-489-3160.

RAW FOOTAGE

Locals turn rock, hip-hop and more into a delicious frenzy. With *Red River School of Taxidermy*, *Overman*, *Bicycle*, *Tricycle*. 9 p.m. \$6. Subterranean, 2011 W. North Ave. housecallent.com

PARAMOUNT STYLES

The sort of moody indie that makes us picture *Ethan Hawke* smoking in the corner of a coffee shop. With *Red Eyed Legends*, *The Living Blue*. 9 p.m. \$8. Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western Ave. 773-276-3600.

MARC BROUSSARD

Soulful pop, nice and easy. With *Gabe Dixon Band*, *Josh Hoge*. 7 p.m. \$20. Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave. 312-559-1212.

ALIVE DAY

No surprises, just decent hometown rock. With *Grammar*, *King Sparrow*. 8 p.m. \$7. Martyrs', 3855 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-404-9869.

**PETRA VAN NUIS
AND ANDY BROWN**
8:30 p.m. \$5. Katerina's, 1920 W. Irving Park Rd. 773-348-7592.

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7:30 p.m. \$5-\$10. FitzGerald's, 6615 Roosevelt Rd., Berwyn. 708-788-2118.

**SHINEDOWN,
SAVING ABEL, THE
GASLIGHT ANTHEM**
5:45 p.m. \$28.50-\$30. House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn St. 312-923-2000.

SHIRLEY KING
9 p.m. Free. The Joynt,

650 N. Dearborn St.
312-573-2233.

**SWEETWATER
MELTDOWN**
9 p.m. Free. Abbey Pub, 3420 W. Grace St. 773-478-4408.

TONY BERNARD
8:30 p.m. Free. The 200 East Supper Club, 200 E. Chestnut St. 312-266-4500.

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9 p.m. \$7. Schubas, 3159 N. Southport Ave. 773-525-2508.

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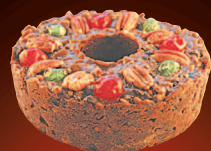
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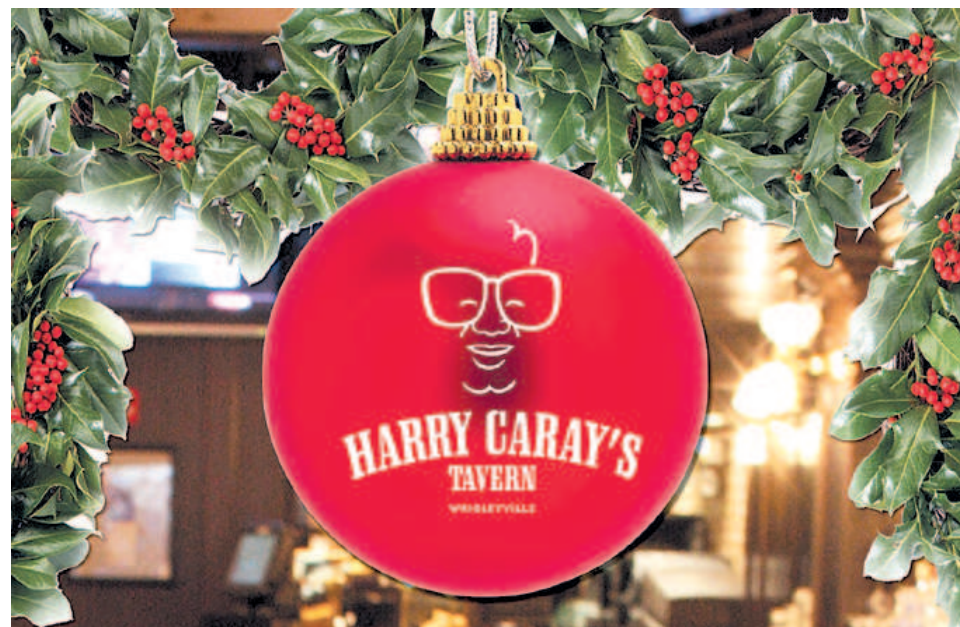
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Soundcheck *your on-sale ticket guide*

On sale 10 a.m. Wednesday

56 Hope Rd., Tuesday, Jan. 13, 20, 27, Feb. 3 (\$6, 21+) at Martyrs'.

Booty Movement Coalition, Monday, Jan. 26 (\$8, 21+) at Martyrs'.

Cornmeal, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb. 11, 18, 25 (\$10, 21+) at Martyrs'.

The Station, The New Congress, The Fuz, Thursday, Jan. 15 (\$7, 21+) at Martyrs'.

Tim Ries' Stones World, Sunday, Dec. 28 (\$15-\$20, 21+) at Martyrs'.

On sale 10 a.m. Friday

Big Head Todd and the Monsters, Friday, April 3,

Saturday, April 4 (\$28-\$30, 17+) at House of Blues.

The Devil Wears Prada, A Day to Remember, Friday, April 10 (\$14.50-\$17, all ages) at House of Blues.

Jon McLaughlin, Friday, Feb. 20 (\$13-\$15, all ages) at House of Blues.

Stellar Road, Thursday, Feb. 5 (\$11-\$13, 17+) at House of Blues.

Glen Tilbrook, Thursday, March 26 (\$21.50-\$24, 21+) at House of Blues Back Porch Stage.

On sale noon Friday

The Airborne Toxic Event, Saturday, Feb. 28 (\$12-\$15, 18+) at Schubas.

Sara Bareilles, Tony Lucca, Tuesday, March 3 (\$25, 21+) at Schubas.

On sale 4 p.m. Friday

Thursday, Four Year Strong, Pierce the Veil, Cancer Bats, Bring Me the Horizon, Thursday, March 12 (\$25.75, all ages) at Aragon.

On sale 10 a.m. Saturday

Cute is What We Aim For, Meg and Dia, Breathe Carolina, Every Avenue, Anarbor, Monday, March 30 (\$15-\$17, all ages) at House of Blues.

On sale 11 a.m. Saturday

Willy Porter, Friday, May 15 (\$22-\$27, all ages) at SPACE.



Cute is What We Aim For

Garnet Rogers, Saturday, Feb. 14 (\$15-\$20, all ages) at SPACE.

Richard Shindell, Saturday, March 6 (\$18-\$22, all ages) at SPACE.

This Must Be the Band (Talking Heads Tribute), Friday, Feb. 13 (\$10-\$15, all ages) at SPACE.

Tyrone Wells, Trevor Hall, Friday, Feb. 20 (\$12-\$15, all ages) at SPACE.

On sale noon Saturday

Baby Loves Disco, DJ Bald Eagle, Sunday, Jan. 11 (\$12-\$15, all ages) at Metro.

Beatallica, Bible of the Devil, Saturday, Jan. 31 (\$8, 21+) at Double Door.

Caspa, Murderbot, Phaded, Nameloc, Thursday, Jan.

22 (\$10, 21+) at Smart Bar.

Cobalt and the Hired Guns, Monday, March 2, April 13, 20 (\$5, 21+) at Double Door.

Jerome Holloway and Friends, Sunday, Feb. 15, 22 (\$5, 21+) at Double Door.

Kaskade, Jose Zaragoza, Just Joey, Saturday, Feb. 14 (\$12-\$15, 21+) at Smart Bar.

Molotov, Friday, Jan. 16 (\$29, 18+) at Metro.

Moxxy, Makeshift Prodigy, Simplistic Urge, A Birdsong Valentine, Minus the Girl, Saturday, Jan. 10 (\$10, all ages) at Metro.

The Presets, Wednesday, April 8 (\$16, 18+) at Metro.

Riot Inside, Souldub, Room 101,

Abandon the Radio, Thursday, Feb. 26 (\$7, 21+) at Double Door.

Sandy Rivera, Dysqo and Gerald Moore, Derek Foreal, Saturday, Jan. 24 (\$10-\$12, 21+) at Smart Bar.

Ralphie Rosario, Sunday, Jan. 18 (\$10, 21+) at Smart Bar.

School of Rock, Sunday, Feb. 1 (\$12, all ages) at Metro.

Claude Vonstroke, Daniel Mnookin, Brian Ffar, Saturday, March 7 (\$10-\$12, 21+) at Smart Bar.

On sale now

Hollywood Undead, Senses Fail, Haste the Day, Brokencyde, Tuesday, March 17 (\$17-\$18, all ages) at House of Blues.

Il Divo, Wednesday, May 20 (\$55-\$150, all ages) at Rosemont Theatre.

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HDTV buying tips

If you're going to buy an HDTV this holiday season, don't overspend or buy an unnecessarily extravagant set.

» Do your homework before getting to the store. Read reviews (cnet.com is a good start), user comments (avsforum.com, amazon.com) and research pricing on the Internet. Prices are negotiable—give the sales rep a price from a reputable online dealer and see if he can match it or come close.

» Do not compare sets on the showroom floor. The HDTV settings come jacked-up from the factory—brightness, contrast and sharpness maxed-out—to catch your eye.

» If several people typically watch TV in your home at the same time, check to see how the picture looks when you stand off to the side. If it's washed out, you're looking at an LCD or a DLP set. You'll want a plasma instead.

» Buy the right size set for your home. All sets look smaller in the showroom. If you'll sit about 6 feet from a 1080p set, buy a 42-inch screen. If you'll sit 7 or 8 feet away, buy a 50-incher. **THE HARTFORD COURANT**

Is your TV ready for the big transition?

Contra Costa Times

Here's a spooky scenario: It's Feb. 18 and you've just plopped down onto the couch after a tough day at work. You grab the remote and click on the TV, yearning to slip away into "American Idol." Only instead of casting your tired eyes upon the bubbly visage of Ryan Seacrest, you find yourself gazing at ...

A screen full of fuzz and snow.

An alien takeover? Not quite. It's the avoidable consequence of TV's great digital transition.

At midnight on Feb. 17, 2009, the nation's networks will stop broadcasting analog signals and switch completely to digital. That move will have no effect on most households, which already watch digital programming.

But the estimated 9 million Americans who still rely on those old metallic rabbit ears or rooftop antennae will have to make some changes or risk losing access to their favorite shows.

We realize you might have some questions about this, especially if you're shopping for a TV this holiday season.

Fortunately, we've got some answers:

Are they doing this to annoy us?

It just seems that way. Federal law has mandated the switch to digital broadcasting. Not only will it offer more programming options, it will free up the old analog airwaves for public-safety needs such as police, fire and ambulance services, as well as advanced wireless services for consumers.

Do I have to do anything?

Not if you have a digital TV or a TV hooked up to cable or satellite service. You are already ahead of the curve and are free to continue vegging out on the couch.

But if you're still using rabbit ears or a rooftop antenna, you have the following options: 1.) Buy a digital-to-analog converter box and connect it to your analog TV; 2.) Buy a digital TV (a TV with a built-in digital tuner); 3.) Subscribe to a cable or satellite pay service; 4.) Ditch TV altogether and take up reading.

How do I know whether I have a digital TV?

First, wipe off the multiple layers of dust on the back of your set and look for labels that might contain the terms "DTV" or "Built-in digital tuner."

If you own an HDTV set, you're fine. And if you were looking to replace your old TV set anyway (a perfect holiday gift to yourself), keep in mind that

all sets built in the U.S. since 2006 are equipped with a digital tuner.

If you have any doubts about the status of your TV, contact the manufacturer and have your model number handy.

What is a digital-to-analog converter box and what does it do?

It's a wondrous plug-in device that receives and magically converts digital signals into a format for display on an analog TV. (Note: You do not need to wait for the DTV transition date to connect the converter box to your TV.) Installation instructions can be found at digitaltips.org.

Converter boxes are available at electronics stores and generally cost from \$40 to \$70—or less than you'd pay for the series DVD set of "The Sopranos."

If I'm buying a new TV, does it have to be an HDTV?

Absolutely not—even though the salesperson at the big-box store might not tell you so. High-definition (HDTV) and digital TV are not synonymous, and regular digital TV sets are much less costly.

On the other hand, if you want the sharpest picture available then, by all means, fork over the extra bucks for that snazzy flat-screen.



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What's the big deal?

The Hartford Courant

What's a budget-class HDTV? With prices sinking almost as fast as the Dow, sometimes it's hard to tell.

Sharp spares the consumer any confusion with its LC-52SB55U, part of an entry-level LCD series positioned below the company's slick Aquos line.

The first giveaway, after the plastic-fantastic bezel, is the screen size-to-price ratio: It's a 52-incher, originally \$2,200, now closer to \$1,700 but spotted for \$1,200 during the recent Black Friday frenzy. When it was introduced late this summer, the average 52-inch set cost closer to \$3,500.

The second giveaway, a combination of old and new technology: It has high-definition's fullest resolution (1080p) but LCD's older, and maligned, 60-hertz refresh format. These sets update a screen's pixels 60 times a second, but movies and most DVDs are filmed at 24-hertz, or 24 frames per second.

For the money, the LC-52SB55U produced an extremely good picture. It did not pop like some HDTVs, though, because it couldn't display the deepest blacks. (The deeper the black level, the richer the colors and more dimensional the picture.) And typical of LCD sets, the picture became washed out on off-angle viewing.



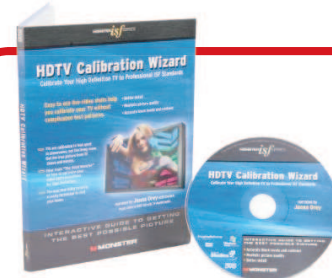
Sharp LC-52SB55U, 52-inch LCD (1080p)

PRICE: \$1,900

INFORMATION: sharpusa.com

HOT: Screen size, picture quality

NOT: With so much plastic, looks like a budget set



Fine tune your HDTV

In the home, souped-up factory settings look unnatural, like bad plastic surgery. The easiest way to calibrate a TV is with the HDTV Calibration Wizard, a \$30 disc at amazon.com. Here are few basic adjustments:

- » Avoid modes like Vivid, Sports, Games. Choose Movie/Cinema or Standard for a more natural picture.
- » Turn sharpness way down, almost off.
- » If your LCD has a backlight setting, turn it down halfway. Then experiment.
- » If there are assorted color temperatures, try "warm." If the color balance appears off, try "normal."

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KFC EXPRESS Great KFC chicken with home-style sides.

NEW ORLEANS KITCHEN Tasty chicken, beef, pork, & seafood entrees, New Orleans specialties, tasty sides, po' boy sandwiches, & more.

PANDA EXPRESS Favorite Chinese dishes such as Kung Pao Chicken, Orange Chicken and Beijing Beef as only Panda Express can do them.

PINKY'S Large menu with gyros, burgers, ribs, hot dogs, polish sausage, chicken, salads, shakes, plus lots more. Breakfast 7:30 to 10:00.

PITA EXPRESS Middle-Eastern cuisine — gyros, shawarma, kabobs, biryani, hummus, falafel, salads, pastries, & more.

PIZZA HUT EXPRESS Pizza Hut personal pan pizzas.

RONNY'S ORIGINAL STEAKHOUSE Full menu with steak, chicken, ribs, sides, beverages, wine, beer & desserts. Open 7am to 10pm.

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G - General audience PG - Parental guidance suggested
PG-13 - Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13
R - Restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian
NC-17 - No one 17 and under admitted

600 N. MICHIGAN (AMC)
600 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago
(312) 255-9340
Show times change daily

AMC Select - The best specialty films

- **Delgo** (PG) 1:50,4:30,7:00,9:30
- **Earth Stood** (PG-13) 1:00,2:00,3:40,4:40,6:30,7:30,9:20,10:20
- **AMC Select Cadillac Rec** (R) 2:30,5:15,8:00,10:45
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 3:00,5:30,8:15,10:40
- **Bolt** (PG) 1:40,4:00,7:10,9:45
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 1:30,4:20,7:20,10:10
- **Quantum-Sol** (PG-13) 2:20,5:00,7:45,10:30
- **Madagascar 2** (PG) 2:40,4:50,7:40,10:00

LANDMARK CENTURY CENTRE CINEMA (LANDMARK)
2828 North Clark St., Chicago
(773) 509-4949

- **Doubt** (PG-13) 1:55,3:10,4:45,6:30,7:35,9:40,10:10
- **Milk** (R) 1:30,2:40,4:30,6:20,7:30,9:30,10:30
- **Slumdog Mill** (R) 1:45,3:00,4:40,6:15,7:45,9:20,10:40
- **Let the Right** (R) 1:50,4:50,10:25

CITY NORTH 14 (KERASOTES)
2600 N. Western Ave.
(800) 326-3264 #1642

- **Glenn Bec** (NR) ★ 7:00
- **Earth Stood** (PG-13) ★ 12:20,1:00,1:40,3:20,4:00,4:40,6:20,7:00,7:40,9:30,10:00,10:30
- **Nothing Like** (PG-13) ★ 1:30,2:00,4:30,5:00,7:20,8:00,10:10,10:40
- **Delgo** (PG) ★ 12:30,2:50,5:10,7:30,9:50
- **Punisher: War** (R) ★ 12:40,3:40,6:30,9:20
- **Cadillac Rec** (R) ★ 2:30,5:20,8:10,10:45
- **Transporter 3** (PG-13) 6:05,8:30,10:50
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 12:50,1:10,3:10,3:50,5:30,6:40,7:50,9:10,10:20
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 1:15,10:15
- **Bolt in 3D** (PG) 1:50,4:20,6:50,9:40
- **Quantum-Sol** (PG-13) 2:20,4:50,7:10,9:45

DAVIS THEATRE (VALUE)
4614 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago
(773) 784-0893

- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 6:15,8:15,10:15
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 5:00,7:30,10:00
- **Bolt** (PG) 5:00,7:00,9:00
- **Quantum-Sol** (PG-13) 5:30,7:45,10:00

FORD CITY 14 (AMC)
S. Cicero at 76th, Chicago
(773) 582-1839
Show times change daily

AMC Select - The best specialty films

- **Delgo** (PG) 2:00,4:15,6:30,8:45
- **Earth Stood** (PG-13) 1:00,2:00,3:00,4:00,5:00,6:00,7:00,8:00,9:00,10:00
- **AMC Select Nothing Like** (PG-13) 1:30,2:30,4:10,5:10,6:30,7:30,8:50,9:50
- **Punisher: War** (R) 1:15,3:45,6:15,9:00
- **AMC Select Cadillac Rec** (R) 1:10,2:10,3:40,4:40,6:10,7:10,8:40,9:40
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 1:05,3:15,5:30,7:45,9:50
- **Transporter 3** (PG-13) 2:05,4:40,7:10,9:40
- **Bolt** (PG) 1:00,3:15,5:30,7:50,10:00
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 1:10,4:00,6:45,9:30
- **Madagascar 2** (PG) 1:20,3:30,5:40,7:50,9:55

GENE SISKEL FILM CENTER
164 State Street
312-846-2800

- **Antonio Gaudi** (NR) 6:15,7:45
- **Seven Bill** (NR) 6:00
- **Shortmetraje** (NR) 8:15

LINCOLN VILLAGE THEATER
6341 N. McCormick at Devon Chicago
312-642-2403

Call theatre for show information

LOGAN THEATRE
2646 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago
(773) 252-0628

- **Transporter 3** (PG-13) 2:15,4:20,6:30,8:40
- **Madagascar 2** (PG) 2:05,4:10,6:15,8:20
- **Changeling** (R) 2:10,5:30,8:10
- **Role Models** (R) 2:10,4:15,6:20,8:30

MUSIC BOX
3733 N. Southport, Chicago
(773) 871-6604

- **Were-World** (NR) 5:15,7:30,9:45
- **Christmas Tale** (NR) 5:30,8:30

PIPERS ALLEY (AMC)
1608 N. Wells, Chicago
(312) 642-7500
Show times change daily

AMC Select - The best specialty films

- **Let Them Chirp** (NR) 1:20,3:30,5:50,8:10
- **Rab Ne Bana** (NR) 6:00 P.M.
- **Dark Streets** (R) 1:15,3:20,5:30,7:50
- **Striped Pajamas** (PG-13) 1:30,3:40
- **AMC Select Rachel Getting** (R) 1:40,4:20,7:00

RIVER EAST 21 (AMC)
322 E. Illinois Street
847-765-7262
Show times change daily

- **AMC Select Frost/Nixon** (R) 1:15,2:15,3:15,4:15,5:15,6:30,8:30,9:45,10:45
- **AMC Select Doubt** (PG-13) 1:30,2:30,4:20,5:20,7:15,8:15,10:10
- **AMC Select Slumdog Mill** (R) 1:20,2:40,4:20,7:20,8:20,10:20
- **Glenn Bec** (NR) 7:00 P.M.
- **Earth Stood** (PG-13) 1:00,2:00,3:00,4:00,6:00,7:00,9:00,10:00,10:45
- **AMC Select Milk** (R) 1:40,2:50,4:40,7:45,8:45,10:40
- **AMC Select Nothing Like** (PG-13) 2:15,5:00,7:40,10:25
- **Punisher: War** (R) 2:10,7:50
- **Striped Pajamas** (PG-13) 6:05 P.M.
- **AMC Select Cadillac Rec** (R) 1:40,4:40,7:40,8:40,10:30
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 2:10,4:45,5:45,7:25,10:00
- **Australia** (PG-13) 3:20,7:00,10:25
- **Transporter 3** (PG-13) 5:05,10:40
- **Bolt** (PG) 1:05,3:45
- **Bolt in 3D** (PG) 10:15 P.M.
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 1:15,4:05,7:10,10:10
- **Quantum-Sol** (PG-13) 1:35,4:05,6:00,7:00,9:50

CROWN VILLAGE 18 (KERASOTES)
7000 Carpenter Rd., Skokie
(800) 326-3264 #2309

- **Earth Stood** (PG-13) ★ 12:10,1:00,2:00,3:20,4:00,4:50,6:20,7:00,7:40,9:00,9:40,10:30
- **Nothing Like** (PG-13) ★ 1:50,4:40,7:30,10:10
- **Delgo** (PG) ★ 12:50,3:40,6:10,8:50
- **Punisher: War** (R) ★ 2:15,5:10,7:45,10:20
- **Cadillac Rec** (R) ★ 1:30,4:30,7:20,10:00
- **Australia** (PG-13) 12:30,4:20,8:20,9:15
- **Transporter 3** (PG-13) 2:10,5:15,7:50,10:15
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 12:20,1:10,3:00,4:10,5:30,6:40,8:10,9:30,10:25
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 12:40,3:30,6:30,9:20
- **Bolt** (PG) 1:40,4:15,6:45
- **Bolt in 3D** (PG) 11:50,2:20,4:45,7:10,9:45
- **Quantum-Sol** (PG-13) 12:45,3:30,6:45,6:50,9:50
- **Madagascar 2** (PG) 12:00,2:30,5:00,7:15,9:55
- **Striped Pajamas** (PG-13) 1:20,3:50,6:15,9:10
- **Role Models** (R) 2:40,5:20,8:00,10:35

WEBSTER PLACE (KERASOTES)
1471 W. Webster Ave., Chicago
(800) 326-3264 #1641

- **Australia** (PG-13) 12:30,2:15,4:00,6:10,8:00,9:40
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 2:40,5:00,7:20,10:00
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 3:15,6:20,9:10
- **Bolt** (PG) 2:20,4:40,7:00,9:30
- **Quantum-Sol** (PG-13) 12:45,1:30,3:20,3:45,4:15,5:15,6:30,7:10,7:50,9:20,10:10,10:30
- **Role Models** (R) 2:00,4:50,7:40,10:20
- **Changeling** (R) 3:30,6:40,9:50
- **Vicky Cristina** (PG-13) 1:45,4:30,7:30,10:15

SHOWPLACE 14 - GALEWOOD CROSSINGS (KERASOTES)
E. Side of Central Ave., just S. of Grand Ave.
(800) 326-3264 #1646

- **Earth Stood** (PG-13) 12:50,1:20,2:30,3:30,4:00,5:15,6:10,6:50,7:50,8:40,9:40,10:20
- **Nothing Like** (PG-13) 12:40,1:40,3:50,4:20,6:40,7:15,9:15,9:50
- **Delgo** (PG) 2:20,4:40,7:00,9:20
- **Punisher: War** (R) 2:00,4:45,7:30,10:00
- **Cadillac Rec** (R) 12:30,1:50,3:20,4:30,6:20,7:20,9:00,10:10
- **Transporter 3** (PG-13) 1:10,4:10,6:45,9:10
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 2:40,5:00,7:45,10:15
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 1:30,4:15,7:40,10:30
- **Bolt** (PG) 1:00,3:40,6:30,8:50
- **Madagascar 2** (PG) 2:10,4:50,7:10,9:30

CICERO SHOWPLACE 14 (KERASOTES)
4779 W. Cermak
(800) 326-3264 #1644

- **Earth Stood** (PG-13) ★ 12:50,1:20,2:30,3:30,4:00,5:15,6:10,6:50,7:50,8:40,9:40,10:20
- **Nothing Like** (PG-13) ★ 12:40,1:40,3:50,4:20,6:40,7:15,9:15,9:50
- **Delgo** (PG) ★ 2:20,4:40,7:00,9:20
- **Punisher: War** (R) ★ 2:00,4:45,7:30,10:00
- **Cadillac Rec** (R) ★ 12:30,1:50,3:20,4:30,6:20,7:20,9:00,10:10
- **Transporter 3** (PG-13) 1:10,4:10,6:45,9:10
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 2:40,5:00,7:45,10:15
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 1:30,4:15,7:40,10:30
- **Bolt** (PG) 1:00,3:40,6:30,8:50
- **Madagascar 2** (PG) 2:10,4:50,7:10,9:30

OAK PARK LAKE CINEMAS (CLASSIC)
1022 Lake Street
630-444-FILM #560

- **Earth Stood** (PG-13) 12:25,2:45,5:05,7:25,9:45
- **Milk** (R) 1:10,4:00,6:50,9:35
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 1:00,3:05,5:10,7:15,9:20
- **Australia** (PG-13) 12:05,3:20,6:35,9:50
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 1:40,4:20,7:00,9:40
- **Bolt in 3D** (PG) 12:00,2:15,4:30,6:45,9:00
- **Quantum-Sol** (PG-13) 12:00,2:20,4:40,7:05,9:30

EVANSTON CENTURY 12/CINEARTS 6 (CENTURY)
1715 MAPLE AVE.
(847) 492-0123

- **Glenn Bec** (NR) ★ 7:00
- **Nothing Like** (PG-13) ★ 11:30,1:55,4:25,7:00,9:30
- **Earth Stood** (PG-13) ★ 11:35,12:25,2:15,3:00,4:45,5:35,7:20,8:10,9:55,10:40
- **Australia** (PG-13) 12:30,4:05,6:15,7:40,9:50
- **Bolt** (PG) 11:35,2:10,4:45,7:20,9:55
- **Cadillac Rec** (R) ★ 11:45,2:25,5:05,7:45,10:25
- **Four Chris** (PG-13) 11:55,1:02,10:30,4:40,5:50,7:10,8:05,9:40,10:35
- **Madagascar 2** (PG) 11:20,1:40,4:00
- **Milk** (R) ★ 11:30,1:15,2:25,4:15,5:30,7:15,8:30,10:15
- **Punisher: War** (R) ★ 12:00,2:35,10:30
- **Quantum-Sol** (PG-13) 11:50,1:20,2:30,4:00,5:10,6:40,7:50,9:20,10:25
- **Slumdog Mill** (R) 11:25,1:05,2:20,4:05,5:20,7:05,8:35,10:05
- **Transporter 3** (PG-13) 11:40,2:00,4:30,7:15,9:45
- **Twilight** (PG-13) 1:50,4:40,7:30,10:20

Where to go for entertainment? Start here.



What to Watch

www.zap2it.com

What's hot for winter

Fashion is in a conservative moment so it should come as no surprise that there was no trend trumpeted for fall/winter that was wildly out of touch, ugly or impractical. Here's a review of the season's big hits to get you through the remaining cold months. **TRIBUNE**



Statement jewelry

Jewelry that says "look at me" has taken off, and that encompasses cuffs from Pucci's runway, long necklaces such as the Tom Binns design worn by Michelle Obama this summer and short, bold chokers.

Boots

Ankle boots, high boots, flat boots (left, by Nine West), shoe boots or booties—whatever iteration they come in, they're a hit. Booties, those ankle boots inspired by men's footwear, hit the spotlight a year ago on runways of designers such as Dolce & Gabbana.

They're now the season's most popular shoe, newest with an open toe, at the high end from brands such as Marni on down to Nine West and Payless. Women wear them to accessorize everything from menswear trousers to skirts and tights.



Marc Jacobs dress

Shine

A shiny top is the perfect foil for tweed trousers or other masculine styles. Shiny dresses from the likes of Marc by Marc Jacobs are gaining popularity as day looks as well as for cocktails and other after-dark activities.



Alexander Wang leggings
GETTY IMAGES FILE

Leather and leather-like leggings

Alexander Wang's in-your-face leathery leggings recalls the hard edges of '80s fashion. Other designers such as Vera Wang and Custo Barcelona had a more feminine take, slipping leggings under tunic dresses and sweaters.

GOODBYE, 2008.
HELLO, 200*wine.*



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Driving character

Driving games are a dime a dozen, but few offer interesting characters in their virtual racers. That's because cars are the stars of this genre. Still, some developers try to add a human touch, introducing stories and characters in the intervals between high-speed action.



Midnight Club Los Angeles

Rockstar / XB360, PS3 / \$59.99

■■■■ The protagonist here is a bland Midwestern dude who moves to California to build a rep in the illegal street racing scene. But the real star is L.A. itself. It's a kick roaring down Sunset Boulevard or Mulholland Drive at 100 mph, although the cops will get on your tail if you create too much chaos. There's a decent assortment of cars to buy or win, and enough different events to keep the most dedicated racing fan busy. The races are challenging, but with enough practice you'll find yourself perfectly comfortable driving the wrong way.

MotorStorm Pacific Rift

Sony / PS3 / \$59.99

■■■■ MotorStorm doesn't bother with a corny plot; it heaves you right into the dirty, dangerous world of off-road racing. Your Pacific journey encompasses all kinds of exotic locales and they all look stunning on the PS3. Much of the fun comes from the wide range of vehicles, from motorcycles to 18-wheelers, that can compete simultaneously. You will crash frequently in Pacific Rift, but it's worth it for the perverse thrill of destroying nature's beauty with a bunch of big, loud machines.

Need for Speed Undercover

EA / XB360, PS3 / \$59.99

■■■■ Actress Maggie Q headlines the latest NFS title, playing a federal agent who recruits you to infiltrate a crime syndicate. To impress the bad guys you have to trade paint with the cops or cause some serious property damage. There's also a variety of ways to take on your fellow street punks, but even inexperienced racers will find most of the events a little too easy. And Undercover is marred by annoying technical glitches, like choppy graphics and long loading times. EA's similar Burnout Paradise is a far superior choice for speed freaks.

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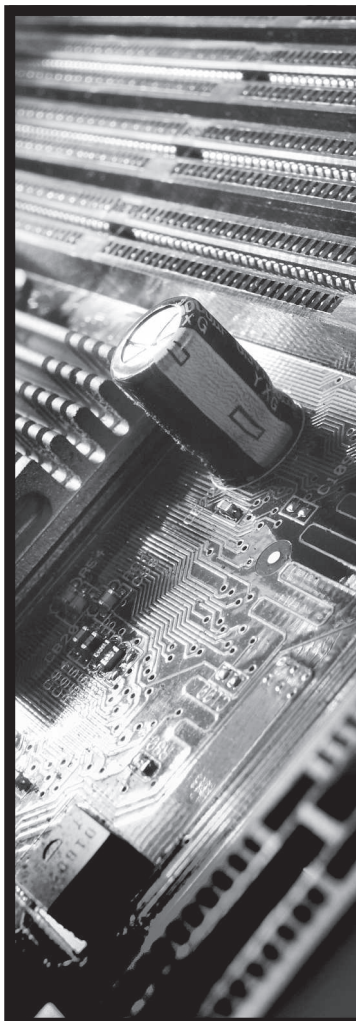
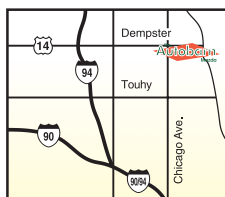
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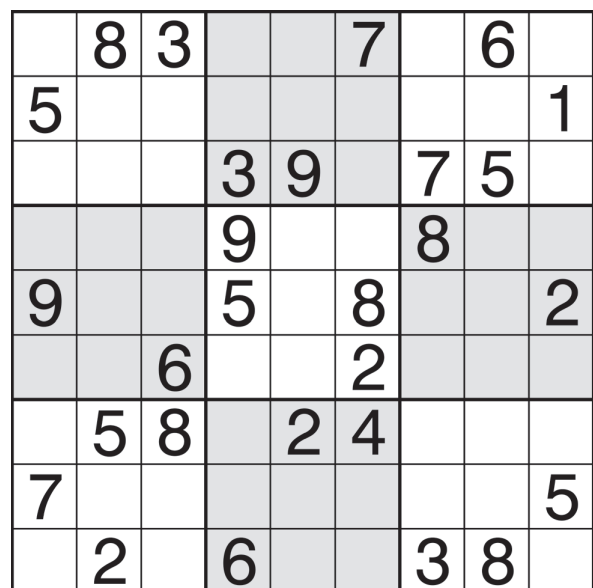


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TUESDAY'S SOLUTIONS

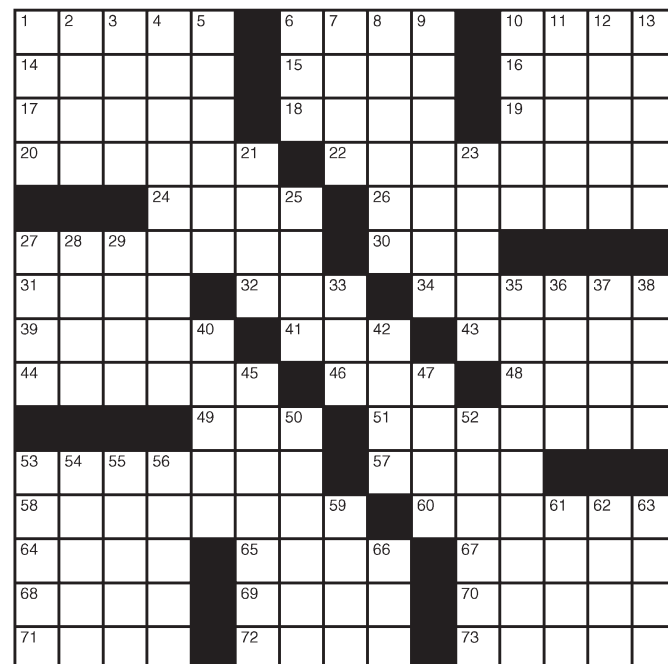
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ACROSS

- 1 Glances over
- 6 Hardwood trees
- 10 Butter squares
- 14 Bottom deck
- 15 Walking stride
- 16 Not present for roll call
- 17 Splitting device
- 18 Actress Lollobrigida
- 19 Magnetic recording
- 20 Faints
- 22 Up a tree
- 24 Fruit drinks
- 26 Carl and Rob
- 27 Get raspier
- 30 Took a load off
- 31 If all _ fails...
- 32 Singer Tillis
- 34 Wistful
- 39 Pseudonym
- 41 Hairstyling product
- 43 While broadcasting
- 44 Young girls
- 46 Slangy contradiction
- 48 At any time
- 49 Inc., abroad
- 51 Five-finger discounters
- 53 Acute infectious disease
- 57 Head of state
- 58 Missing company
- 60 T.S. and George
- 64 Spicy stew
- 65 "Kiss Me _"
- 67 Dern or Davies
- 68 Signage light
- 69 Freudian concerns
- 70 Preminger and Kruger
- 71 Writer O'Brien
- 72 In the mail
- 73 Adam and Mae

DOWN

- 1 Boars' mates
- 2 Support group
- 3 Ray of "Battle Cry"
- 4 War-zone hot spots
- 5 Shells out cash
- 6 Word with head



- 7 or noodle
- 8 Secular
- 9 Secondary areas of study
- 10 Fix one's eyes upon
- 11 Eucharist plate
- 12 Alert
- 13 Drunkard
- 14 Winter racers
- 15 Ooze
- 16 Funny-car fuel
- 17 Catch

- 27 Become cured
- 28 Stew pot
- 29 Sale phrase
- 33 Game pieces
- 35 Make drunk
- 36 PC command
- 37 Stadium level
- 38 Flubs it
- 40 Tennis champ Monica
- 42 Folk tales
- 45 Drives and putts
- 47 Large volume

- 50 Cause injury to
- 52 Swell of an undulating mass
- 53 Genetic copy
- 54 Sank (a putt)
- 55 Vidalia veggie
- 56 Famous Helmsley
- 59 Harrow rival
- 61 Inning enders
- 62 Jogger's gait
- 63 Give guff to
- 66 Approx.

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BY
JIM
WALSH

What up, brosef?

Male pattern bonding is in the air

When “Boston Legal” ended its run last week, the series finale also marked the end of one of prime time’s most poignant bromances. The deep friendship between William Shatner’s Denny Crane and James Spader’s Alan Shore,

marked by their regular dates for cigars and Scotch at the end of the day, was a touchstone of the dramedy. But as Denny and Alan ride off into the sunset, TV will have plenty of bromances. Consider these manly TV friendships. **MCT**



HIRO AND ANDO, ‘HEROES’

They were best pals when both were comic-loving office drones in Tokyo, and Hiro and Ando (Masi Oka and James Kyson Lee) remain best pals now that Hiro has saved the world twice—and Ando has saved Hiro with his newfound power.



HOUSE AND WILSON, ‘HOUSE’

House (Hugh Laurie) and his best friend, Wilson (Robert Sean Leonard), are reluctant life partners whose relationship has survived multiple marriages (Wilson’s) and countless episodes of bad behavior (almost all House’s).



TED AND BARNEY, ‘HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER’

Barney (Neil Patrick Harris) is a full-blown cad, with sexual exploits (he once slept with a woman while posing as his own evil twin) that are legendary. But Barney’s loyalty to his friend Ted (Josh Radnor) is just as legendary; he’s so dedicated to finding his friend a mate that his catchphrase in Season 1 became, “Have you met Ted?”



J.D. AND TURK, ‘SCRUBS’

J.D. (Zach Braff) and his best friend, Turk (Donald Faison), have been friends and roommates since college, and their history is as much intertwined as if they were husband and husband. “We’re a little married,” Turk even admitted in one episode of “Scrubs,” moving to ABC next month.



VINCE AND ERIC, ‘ENTOURAGE’

Eric is Vince’s manager, but their relationship, dating to childhood in Brooklyn, is so much more than that. Eric (Kevin Connolly) has supported Vince (Adrian Grenier) through career choices good and bad and through romances ill-advised and more ill-advised.

Oka (left) and Lee
NBC

Grenier (left) and Connolly
HBO

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Hathaway
AP FILE

Hudson
AP FILE

Single ladies

In new interviews, Anne Hathaway and Kate Hudson talk about life after love. In January's *Vogue*, Hathaway goes shopping, ditching clothes associated with her ex. "We were in the process of [breaking up] when he was arrested," said the "Rachel Getting Married" star, according to excerpts on usmagazine.com. Since the split, she made some life changes, such as going vegetarian and listening to indie music. As for Hudson, she tells *InStyle*'s January issue that "I've made a conscious decision to try to stay single as long as possible." Her pal, Stella McCartney, who was interviewing her for the piece, joked, "What's it been—all of two weeks? Congratulations!"

Actors: Just say no

Mega stars such as George Clooney and Tom Hanks have signed a petition urging the Screen Actors Guild to vote against a strike in January, *Entertainment Weekly* reported. "We support our union and we support the issues we're fighting for, but we do not believe in all good conscience that now is the time to be putting people out of work," the A-listers wrote in a letter.

Hotlanta seconds

"The Real Housewives of Atlanta" has been picked up by Bravo for another season, y'all. The first season—starring Kim Zolciak, Sheree Whitfield, NeNe Leakes, DeShawn Snow and Lisa Wu Hartwell—was the biggest "Housewives" hit for the network, besting their counterparts from the O.C. and the Big Apple, according to *Variety*.

TICKER PARADE

In honor of CNN's dearly departed Ticker, here is RedEye's homage, the celeb version.

» Michelle Williams will not accept Golden Globe on Heath Ledger's behalf if he wins.
 » Oprah Winfrey says goodbye to ABC, takes production company to HBO for three-year deal.
 » Dennis Quaid and his wife agree to \$750,000 settlement with a hospital that gave his newborn twins an overdose of blood thinner.
 » Halle Berry and Tyler Perry will host the 40th NAACP Image Awards on Feb. 12.
 » J.Lo set to star in the "fertility-themed" romantic comedy "Plan B." **FROM NEWS SERVICES**

QUOTABLE

"Don't say anything crummy about me."

ASHLEE SIMPSON-WENTZ,

to husband Pete Wentz before going on the "Howard Stern Show," where he gave too much information about their sex life. TMI, Pete, TMI.



txtable

Celebrity twin

Do you look like a celebrity? Show us! Send your picture along with the name of the celeb who shares your style to dlhernandez@tribune.com. For Wednesday, we have Ai'sian Chatman. Think she's a ringer for Beyonce? Text "**twin**" and the number of your opinion to **47383**. You'll get the poll results instantly.

1. DEAD ON

2. WAY OFF



Chatman



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red hot

ALBA IN 'OFFICE'

First Jack Black, now Jessica Alba.

"The Office" is just rackin' up the guest stars for its show on Super Bowl night.

A day after we found out Black was coming to Scranton, Pa., the network announced that Alba will stop by as well.

They will play actors in a bootleg movie that the Dunder-Mifflin staff will be sneakily watching during work hours.

Oh, and rumor has it that "Dancing With the Stars" firebrand Cloris Leachman also will make an appearance, according to a zap2it.com report.

We'll just have to wait and see about that.

Private party—Diddy-style



Diddy: Music mogul. Fashion icon. Party planner?

That's right. The hip-hop mogul threw a birthday bash for his ex, Kim Porter, in

West Hollywood on Monday, according to People. The guest list included Ellen Pompeo and Sara Ramirez of "Grey's Anatomy" and also E! reality personality Lisa Gastineau. (Must have been a slow day for celeb spotting.)

Nearly 30 guests partied at the private event for Porter, the mother of Diddy's twin girls and 10-year-old son.



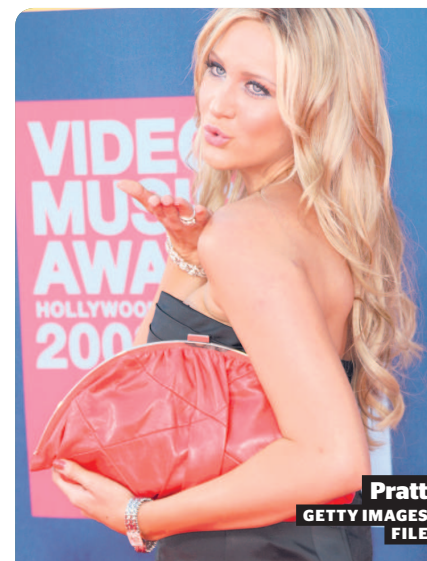
Alba
GETTY IMAGES



NOV. 20, 2009

That's when the "Twilight" sequel, "New Moon," is scheduled to open in theaters, according to The Associated Press.

THE VELVET ROPE



Pratt
GETTY IMAGES
FILE

Unscripted 'Hills'

It's official: Spencer Pratt and Heidi Montag are married.

After eloping in Mexico, "The Hills" stars made their marriage official in California, according to Spencer's sister, Stephanie Pratt who spoke with RedEye by phone Tuesday.

Pratt tells RedEye she was at the Beverly Hills courthouse as a witness. "It was just really weird with a police officer and judge, a deputy; it was just very bizarre," she said.

So will Speidi have a reception with friends and family? "They have to. I know Holly and I will make Heidi do it," said Pratt, who recently met Heidi's sister, Holly, for the first time.

"Heidi for the past two years has always been saying, 'You remind me of my sister. You'd get along so well,'" she said.

» For more "Hills" chatter, go to redeye.chicago.com/headoverhills

Fox goes musical

"High School Musical" is so 2008.

The network behind "Family Guy" is set to bring TV audiences a prime-time musical sitcom, The Associated Press reports.

Fox has ordered 13 episodes of "Glee," a series about a high school teacher and his efforts to take the school's glee club to national prominence. At least three musical numbers will appear in each episode, slated to appear in 2009.

Here's to hoping that choreography and catchy choruses make high school more tolerable than the real thing.

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